

**Joint Meeting of the Greater Madison MPO
and the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC)
August 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

[Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom](#)

MPO Chair Opitz called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Quorum of both agencies was established.

1. Roll Call and Introductions

MPO Members present: Richelle Andrae, Phil Caravello, Paul Esser, Stephen Flottmeyer, Gary Halverson, Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Jerry Mandli, Mark Opitz, Kristi Williams, Doug Wood

MPO Members absent: Margaret Bergamini, Grant Foster, Thomas Lynch, Nasra Wehelie

CARPC Members present: Maureen Crombie, Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Steve Greb (joined during item #3), Kris Hampton (not able to speak due to lack of audio connection), Peter McKeever, Heidi Murphy, David Pfeiffer, Jim Schuler, Caryl Terrell, Nick Zavos

CARPC Members absent: Mark Geller, Anthony Gray, David Wallner

MPO staff present: Colleen Hoesly, Ben Lyman, Bill Schaefer

CARPC staff present: Mike Rupiper, Caitlin Shanahan, Haley Smith, Steve Steinhoff

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

2. Public Comment (for items *not* on the agenda)

None

3. History of the Relationship Between the MPO and RPC

Schaefer presented on the history of the relationship between the MPO and the RPC, including timing of historic joint plans, the removal of the MPO from the Dane County RPC, the dissolution of the Dane County RPC, the creation of CARPC, and more recent efforts to better coordinate the agencies. He then described outcomes of a joint work group, which identified ways in which the two agencies could better collaborate, including the possible merger of the two agencies. This presentation included information on:

- Alternatives as to how agency organizational structures could or would need to change in the event of a merger;
- The process for merging the agencies under various alternatives; and,
- Challenges with merger options

Schaefer then posed a discussion question (for consideration under item #6) as to whether or not there is any interest on the part of either board in pursuing a merger of the agencies.

Pfeiffer asked if one of the challenges posed by the makeup of the two boards is due to the MPO and CARPC having different geographic boundaries. Schaefer clarified that although that is part of the issue, the larger challenge is that federal law specifies a specific makeup of the MPO Policy Board, which does not allow the type of citizen representation that CARPC is able to use, requires WisDOT and transit agency representation, and requires proportionate representation by various types of communities in the Planning Area.

Greb asked for clarification about the roles and responsibilities of MPO and CARPC, and what differences or areas of overlap exist between their responsibilities. Schaefer explained that the MPO is the regional

transportation planning agency with jurisdiction in the metropolitan area, and is responsible to ensure that federal requirements related to transportation planning are met in that area. Additionally, the MPO approves use of federal funding in the metropolitan area, including selecting projects with funding allocated to the MPO. New federal requirements include coordination between transportation planning and housing, which is integral to CARPC's land use planning work. The MPO also provides review and comment on Sewer Service Area Amendments for CARPC. Steinhoff explained the role of Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) on a state-wide basis, and how they are established. CARPC's main responsibilities under state statutes include land use and water quality planning. These areas overlap considerably with transportation, as land use is the major driver of transportation needs. CARPC is also under contract to the state to administer the Dane County Water Quality Monitoring Process, including the establishment of Sewer Service Areas and amendments thereto. The integration of environmental and water quality planning with land use planning is another key charge of CARPC.

Andrae asked about the structure of other RPCs and MPOs in the state, and if they are all organized similarly to MPO and CARPC, or if some have a combined organization. Schaefer referenced materials in the meeting packet that describe the various relationships between MPOs and RPCs in Wisconsin, and noted that some are organized with the RPC as the host agency of the MPO, others have cities or counties as the host agency of the MPO, and in others the RPC and the MPO are the same agency. Andrae then asked if there were particular problems or reasons for bringing up the discussion of a potential agency merger at this time. Schaefer responded that there is no particular impetus for raising the issue at this time, and that staff still concur with the findings of the joint agency work group that most of the benefits of a merger can be accomplished with better coordination and do not require a full merger. Raising the issue now is not a suggestion that a merger should take place, but the joint meeting seemed a good opportunity to verify again that neither board feels strongly that a merger should be pursued at this time. Steinhoff stated that with the recent adoption of the two regional plans, there is an opportunity to revisit where the region is with regional planning, and how to move forward from here. Schaefer spoke to the question of CARPC hiring an Executive Director, and how creating such a position would be more viable if the two agencies were merged.

4. Review of Status of Recommendations from the 2017-2018 MPO-CARPC Workgroup Report

Steinhoff began his presentation with information about the creation of the joint workgroup, and how the two agencies were coordinating prior to the establishment of the workgroup. He discussed the importance of integrating land use and transportation planning, which was the impetus for the creation of the workgroup. He then presented on the status of recommendations from the joint agency workgroup report. The group defined its mission as reviewing three areas of potential cooperation (planning, administration, and governance) over three timeframes (short-, medium-, and long-term). He provided examples of these strategies in action, discussed how some of them have been accomplished, and highlighted strategies that are underway or have not been pursued. He summarized that the short-term objectives have been met, that agency staff are focusing efforts on mid-term focal points, and that the long-term possibility of an agency merger is still on the table.

Wood stated that it seems that progress has been made, but asked if would be worth the effort to pursue an agency merger. Steinhoff responded that the short-term actions lay the groundwork to enable the completion of the medium-term objectives, and that the medium-term actions similarly lay the groundwork to make the long-term objectives possible. He stated that once the medium-term objectives are complete, there will be other possible ways to further enhance coordination short of a merger, such as through intergovernmental agreements or similar cooperative agreements. Schaefer agreed and mentioned specific coordination efforts, such as the Regional Development Framework (RDF) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) being developed in concert with each other, and the joint webinar series. He went on to say that most of the obstacles to a merger are political, and that continuing the medium-term efforts will help establish the political support for a merger. He said one benefit to the MPO of merging with CARPC would be optical, as many people in other communities view the MPO as biased toward the City of Madison – at least in part because MPO staff are city of Madison employees with city email addresses. Additionally, the MPO must follow city IT and other policies and procedures, which can restrict their ability to respond dynamically and to

coordinate with outside agencies such as CARPC. Steinhoff spoke to the importance of agency cooperation in building a region-wide understanding of and support for regional planning efforts.

Pfeiffer stated that the region is functionally much larger than either the MPO or CARPC boundaries, and that growing understanding of and support for regional planning on a larger scale with partner agencies will be necessary over the long term. He then spoke to the importance of strategic planning, and how the trajectories of both agencies should be based on accomplishing shared goals. Harrington-McKinney thanked staff for the thoroughness of the materials in the packet, and expressed how helpful the information is for a new board member/commissioner. She then referred to the intersection of land use, environment, and transportation planning and how critical coordinated planning is to addressing regional issues. Pfeiffer spoke to historical presentations which listed many independent and unrelated plans, and how the plethora of plans was confusing to commissioners as well as the public, and how coordinated plans simplify this for everyone. Terrell spoke about the importance of strategic planning. She called out the RDF and its metrics and goals which must be met to address such issues as climate change, and how the efforts ahead for both CARPC and the MPO – and other agencies – are monumental, and call for coordinated strategic planning. This doesn't require the merger of the agencies, but the shared goals and coordinated strategic planning will be critical to success in implementing the desired changes in the region.

5. Review of Status of Recommendations from the Coordinated MPO and CARPC Rebranding Projects

Shanahan presented on the rebranding process itself, and then on the status of strategic actions that were recommended by the rebranding consultant to improve the accessibility of both agencies to the public and improve their ability to assist communities. She then described new opportunities for coordination that were not included in the joint workgroup, the rebranding process, or the joint committee on rebrand rollout recommendations, and provided the current status of those opportunities.

She then explained that although the plan had been to use small breakout rooms to discuss future priorities for agency alignment (Item #6), the Zoom meeting format being used for the meeting does not support breakout rooms. She asked for clarification on how to adapt to this situation. Schaefer suggested a short large group discussion given the hour and fact that the MPO board had met earlier. He identified a key question as being whether or not to reconvene a joint workgroup to explore options for further integrating agency work or perhaps discuss whether to pursue an agency merger.

6. Breakout Small Group Discussion

[Note: Discussion occurred as large group as small groups breakout was not possible due to technology limitations.]

Wood stated that he is making it a practice to mention the MPO when he does committee reports for the Monona City Council; many other alders and elected officials do not even know what the MPO is. He then stated that he doesn't think that it is necessary to reconvene a joint workgroup at this time. Schaefer suggested that all board and commission members include their MPO/CARPC role in their introductions in various meetings where appropriate. Terrell suggested including a standing agenda item for CARPC meetings on the status of the strategies and objectives described in the various presentations, particularly the status of potential staff sharing agreements. Shanahan asked if coordinating staffing would be considered a high, medium, or low priority; Terrell responded that it seems that coordinated staffing is a shorter-range project, but that keeping it on the agenda will help ensure that progress continues. She suggested that coordinating with other agencies outside the planning areas is a similar endeavor.

Pfeiffer spoke to the progress that has been made, and asked if agency staff could continue coordination work on their own, or if board and commission members needed to be more involved. Steinhoff responded that shared staff positions would require the involvement of board and commission members. Schaefer stated that staff could make some prioritization through the development of next year's Work Programs. Pfeiffer stated that trying to accomplish work with the full commission of thirteen members is very cumbersome, so they often have smaller working groups or executive committees to conduct work.

McKeever spoke to the politics of an agency merger, and how increasing awareness of the regional ramifications of planning and development across jurisdictions is vital to addressing the issues facing the region. He also spoke to the idea that very few people are even aware of the MPO and CARPC, and even fewer care about what the agencies do unless they are directly affected by a decision, as in a Sewer Service Area amendment or funding of a transportation project. He referred to the “visibility problem” of the two agencies, and the difference between their roles (i.e. CARPC has an advisory role, while the MPO controls funding). Pfeiffer described the situation as having two tracks: one being associated with the objectives and goals of the two agencies, and the other related to their structures and opportunities to leverage the differences between the agencies. Terrell suggested that coordinating on staffing, and potentially a single Executive Director for both agencies, will involve the board and commission, but that outreach and communication can be led by staff.

Opitz asked Schaefer if he concurred that outreach and communication work could be led by staff, and Schaefer indicated that he did agree. He then clarified that a joint position such as an Executive Director would be difficult to accomplish with the current structure, but that sharing other positions could be more feasible and would be pursued.

7. Small Group Discussion Report Out

[Note: Did not take place as the discussion occurred with entire group during Item #6]

8. Adjournment

Williams moved, Halverson seconded, to adjourn the meeting for the MPO Board. Motion carried.

McKeever moved, Harrington-McKinney seconded, to adjourn the meeting for CARPC. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.