

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)<sup>1</sup>**  
**January 6, 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**

**Members present:** Margaret Bergamini (joined during item #3), Yogesh Chawla, Steve Flottmeyer, Grant Foster, Patrick Heck (joined during item #6), Dorothy Krause, Tom Lynch, Jerry Mandli (joined during item #7), Mark Opitz, Doug Wood, Paul Esser,

**Members absent:** Samba Baldeh, Ed Minihan, Mike Tierney

**MPO staff present:** Bill Schaefer, Ben Lyman

**Others present in an official capacity:** Forbes McIntosh (DCCVA), Madison Ald. Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Liz Wessel (Sierra Club-Four Lakes Chapter)

**2. Approval of December 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Chawla moved, Krause seconded, to approve the December 2, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**3. Communications**

- Letter from WisDOT Secretary indicating that the 2021-2025 TIP had been approved
- Letter from USDOT notifying WisDOT and relevant agencies that the 2021 MPO Work Program had been approved.
- Email notice from WisDOT about the completion of the U.S. Highway 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) project Environmental Assessment (forwarded to board members). Schaefer said WisDOT Region staff will present on this project at the next meeting. He noted that a major TIP amendment will be required to add the project to the TIP.

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

Liz Wessel introduced herself and stated that she was attending the meeting for items #8 and 9, which are of interest to the Sierra Club – Four Lakes Chapter. She noted that the statewide Sierra Club completed a report, *Arrive Together*, an analysis of access to job centers in cities across the state – including Madison – and that they are interested in following how this work is being addressed. They are also going to be involved in the Metro Network Redesign Study, and all of these issues are interrelated. Chawla requested that Wessel send all Board members the *Arrive Together* report; Schaefer suggested that the report be sent to him and he would forward it to board members.

**5. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 1 Approving Amendment #2 to the 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County**

Schaefer reviewed the projects included in the amendment.

Esser moved, Chawla seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 1 approving amendment #2 to the 2021-2025 TIP. Motion carried.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly named Madison Area Transportation Planning Board

## **6. MPO 2021 Resolution No. 2 Approving the 2021 Public Participation Plan for the Greater Madison MPO**

Schaefer stated that staff reviewed the draft 2021 Public Participation Plan (PPP) with the board during the November 2020 meeting, and that the draft PPP was subsequently released for public comment. Most of the comments received were related to the stakeholder and agency contact list in an appendix, and those lists were revised accordingly. Another change is that a public hearing on the PPP, which was listed in the draft PPP as a requirement but which is not a federal requirement, was removed from the process. Staff did not feel a hearing was necessary on the PPP.

Bergamini moved, Wood seconded, to approve MPO 2021 Resolution No. 2 approving the 2021 Public Participation Plan. Motion carried.

## **7. Discussion Regarding Local Match Funding for MPO's Budget**

Opitz acknowledged that some board members had expressed an interest in postponing some agenda items and adjourning early, and noted that no remaining agenda items were action items. He asked if any board members wanted to discuss this item at this meeting, or if it should be postponed. No objections to postponing the item were raised.

Foster moved, Bergamini seconded, to postpone this item and refer to the February board meeting. Motion carried.

## **8. Presentation on Survey of Local Pedestrian and Bicycle Related Infrastructure Requirements**

Opitz opened the possibility of postponing this item if the board so desired. Esser indicated that he would prefer to continue the meeting and complete the remaining agenda items, and no objections to continuing were raised.

Lyman described the parameters of the survey, namely that the adopted ordinances of almost all cities and villages in the MPO Planning Area had been researched, and then follow-up questions and standards not adopted by ordinance had been provided by local staff. He described the types of infrastructure covered in the survey, and provided both local standards and recommendations from ITE, NACTO, and AASHTO for those facilities.

During the portion of the presentation on curb radii at intersections, Bergamini suggested that transit bus turning radii be considered. Foster recommended that the NACTO publication *Don't Give Up at the Intersection* be reviewed and considered in the recommendations portion of this survey. Lynch stressed that curb radii need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and that encroachment into oncoming lanes can be problematic for Metro bus routes. Lyman clarified that the smallest curb radii recommendations apply to intersections of local streets, where refuse and EMS vehicles are the largest vehicles to typically turn at the intersection, and that curb radii should certainly accommodate transit vehicles and other large vehicles which must navigate the intersection frequently. Lynch commented on the need to consider this on a case by case basis.

During the section of the presentation on sidewalk requirements and funding, Opitz asked how frequently existing sidewalks were widened when reconstructed; Lyman clarified that this type of information was not included in his research, but that sidewalks would typically only be widened when the adjacent road was reconstructed. Opitz noted that constraints include property lines and established terrace trees, and that in Middleton he is proposing to reduce street width to enable construction of a sidewalk on at least one side of streets that lack sidewalks when they are reconstructed. Foster stated that how local snow removal ordinances are enforced, and how bike path maintenance is conducted, is a complex problem with many facets that he is interested in and working on addressing. Lyman responded that this was also information that was beyond the scope of the research he had conducted. Schaefer suggested that this would be a good topic to bring up with the MPO Technical Committee to see how area communities address snow removal on sidewalks as well as on sidepaths.

Lyman described sidewalk funding alternatives used by area communities and resulting concerns about the equitable distribution of costs for sidewalk improvements in communities. Chawla asked if staff have received

feedback from communities indicating that they are concerned about or opposed to the installation of improved non-motorized transportation facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Lyman clarified that he has not heard this feedback from any communities per se, but that he has heard from individuals. He then clarified that he in no way was suggesting that these facilities should not be provided in transportation-disadvantaged neighborhoods, or that network connectivity is not important for these neighborhoods, only that planners and engineers need to be aware that there may be other reasons for potential opposition to these facilities and that we need to be ready to listen to community concerns, and not just assume that such facilities will be viewed as improvements by the people they are intended to serve. Neighborhoods need to be engaged as projects are proposed and designed. Bergamini noted that there is concern in older, existing neighborhoods with no sidewalks and with planned upcoming complete streets reconstructions, that the assessments for the project will pose equity concerns and should perhaps be borne by the entire community and not just the neighborhood. Foster stated that this is a top concern for him, and that he has been working with city staff on the question of funding transportation infrastructure, and that this is a contentious issue as streets are reconstructed. Some opposition is based on resident concerns about losing landscaping/yard and on the need for snow removal, but assessments for funding sidewalk construction add another level of opposition. He noted concerns with how some bullets on the equity concerns slide of the presentation are worded, and stated that the issue is gentrification and displacement rather than about improvements to the transportation network. He suggested that the solutions to this are in the provision of affordable housing and anti-displacement and gentrification work. Policy makers and planners need to stay committed to building out pedestrian and bike networks in all neighborhoods, and particularly in low-income neighborhoods, which currently have the worst access. He suggested revising the language on the slide to ensure that it does not appear to suggest that these facilities should not be provided in order to preserve affordability and slow or prevent gentrification. Schaefer stated that staff would edit the slide to address the concern.

Lyman acknowledged that the discussion of equity and the role of transportation access in gentrification and displacement is awkward and messy, but that it is necessary for the discussion to take place in order to move forward in addressing these issues. Opitz mentioned an effort to change the City of Middleton's policy of sidewalks being funded 100% by adjacent property owners, and opposition from property owners who had already paid for sidewalks adjacent to their property not wanting to pay for sidewalks in other areas. He asked if other communities had changed the way they fund sidewalk improvements and what their experiences were. Wood stated that the City of Monona had changed to a 100% city-funded model in the last few years, and that this was done in part because installing sidewalks in existing neighborhoods is very difficult even without assessing costs to property owners. Monona is working to expand the sidewalk network, so new sidewalks will benefit more than just the adjacent property owners. Esser noted that Sun Prairie has always funded new sidewalk construction in existing neighborhoods, partly because residents of older neighborhoods tended to be older and would be less likely to be able to afford the cost of new sidewalks. He stated that even though Sun Prairie pays for sidewalk retrofits, they still encounter "robust opposition" when installing new sidewalks, and often oppose narrowing roadways during reconstruction in order to make room for sidewalks. Foster noted that what is "fair" depends on the situation, and that busier streets need sidewalks. Some residential streets don't need sidewalks to have good pedestrian network connectivity. It is not fair to assess the cost against owners because the sidewalks benefit everyone in the neighborhood. Schaefer said staff would also ask technical committee members about this.

Following the presentation, Lynch asked for clarification on whose requirements the survey had been about; Lyman clarified that these were locally adopted requirements and not MPO-imposed or proposed requirements. Schaefer stated that the intended audience is local staff and officials, so that they can see what other communities are requiring and recommended best practices. The hope is that this will assist communities seeking to modify requirements to address network connectivity and system performance and safety through design.

## **9. Presentation on Analysis of Travel from Environmental Justice Priority Areas to Major Employment Areas**

Lyman provided a presentation on the findings of his analysis using StreetLight Data to investigate travel between the MPO's Environmental Justice Priority Areas (EJ Areas) and identified major

Employment Centers. Opitz stated that in his 10-12 years on the MPO Policy Board, this is the most important and eye-opening data that he has seen. Foster asked if travel times between Employment Centers and non-EJ Areas had been analyzed. Lyman stated that they had not, as he could not figure out how to make such an analysis meaningful for comparison. Foster suggested that baseline data on the relative travel time disparities between modes is necessary to provide context to the EJ-to-Employment travel time comparisons: a bus commute that is four times as long as an automobile commute sounds bad, but it is simply the reality of the two modes for many trips, not just for those originating in or destined for EJ Areas. He referred to a travel diary he kept pre-COVID in which he calculated the travel time for each trip for various travel modes. In the two weeks he kept track his trips would take 49% more time by bike than by car, and transit trips would take nearly 400% as long as they would by car. This is important because with the current transit network, there are only certain Origin-Destination (O-D) pairs that are served well with travel times comparable to auto travel times, and that from Eastmorland, a non-EJ Area, unless you are going downtown transit access is pretty bad and comparable to most of the travel times shown in the presentation for EJ Areas. Analyzing travel times from non-EJ Areas would help in understanding how much worse travel times are for EJ Area residents than they are for residents of other areas, and to what degree travel times are conditions of the existing transit or bike networks.

Lyman discussed his thought process for establishing a zone set for non-EJ Areas, and his concerns regarding establishing a meaningful control group or baseline for comparison. Schaefer suggested conducting the analysis based on travel times to major Employment Centers from various areas, comparing travel times to that employment destination from both EJ and non-EJ Areas. He said this had been done for a previous RTP.

Chawla asked how transportation priorities are set, particularly for biking infrastructure. He referred to the Lower Yahara River Trail and the \$6.5 million budget for that project, and how it will primarily serve recreational trips not utilitarian trips. He asked how far that \$6.5 million would go in closing gaps in the network to facilitate trips to work, shopping, school, and other destinations. He wondered how the prioritization of recreational facilities over utilitarian facilities occurs. Schaefer stated that Dane County funds for independent bicycle path projects are administered through the Parks Dept. and that they prioritize recreational projects, which have their own benefits. Chawla asked how much funding in PARC Grants the City of Madison or other communities have received, and what kinds of gap-closing projects could be completed with \$6.5 million. Schaefer responded that compared to the ~\$300K the MPO distributes for funding each year it is a lot, but that a single bike/ped overpass could cost \$2-3 million. What it could fund would depend on project type, but it could close some significant gaps in the network. Chawla asked if the MPO could come up with a prioritized list of projects that could be funded with \$6.5 million and provide that to Dane County Supervisors for their consideration when reviewing projects for PARC Grant funding. Schaefer replied that projects are identified through gaps and barriers analysis and listed in the RTP as priorities. Chawla requested that an ambitious list of projects desired by communities be provided to supervisors to help close gaps and barriers. Lynch stated that the urban treatments which could be accomplished for \$6.5 million would be extensive, but the timeline for public input, design, and construction would be lengthy.

Lynch discussed transit service and trade-offs between geographic coverage and direct service with shorter travel times, as well as how this analysis is being used in the Network Redesign Study, clarifying the level of communication between MPO and Metro/Consultant (JWA) staff leading that project. Opitz stated that his conversations with Dane County Parks Dept. staff indicate that PARC Grant funding will be highly competitive this year. Chawla asked that desired projects and PARC Grant applications be sent directly to supervisors as well as to staff so that supervisors can be aware of the desired projects, not just those recommended by staff.

Opitz recognized Harrinton-McKinney, who commented that she appreciated the presentations and the discussion, and that she agreed that conversations around equity are messy and awkward, but necessary. She stated that affected residents need to be involved in project design and determining which features are appropriate in their neighborhoods and thanked staff for their work.

**10. Status Report on Capital Area RPC Activities**

None, there was no December 2020 CARPC meeting.

**11. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings**

The next meeting is Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

**12. Adjournment**

Krause moved, Bergamini seconded, to adjourn meeting. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.