

Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
June 2, 2004 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

Members present: Eileen Bruskewitz, Ken Golden, Robbie Webber, Laura Rose, Al Matano, Rose Phetteplace, Bob Dye
Members absent: Lisa MacKinnon, Kris Euclide, John Volker
Staff present: Bob McDonald, Bill Schaefer, Bob Pike

MPO board members and staff introduced themselves to Laura Rose, who replaced Dave Phillips as a City appointee.

2. Approval of April 15, 2004 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Bruskewitz, seconded by Dye, to approve April 15, 2004 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

- Letter from City of Fitchburg to McDonald, requesting traffic modeling assistance from MPO staff to analyze traffic impacts from redevelopment of an 80-acre area bounded by McKee Road on the north, Nesbitt Road on the south and east, and the City limit on the west. McDonald said development plans include a Target store. Matano requested a map of the area.
- Letters from City of Madison Mayor to Laura Rose and Bob Dye confirming their appointment and reappointment, respectively, to the MPO Board.
- Letter from City of Madison Mayor to Dave Phillips thanking him for his service on the MPO Board.
- Letter from David Hanneman, City of Sun Prairie Mayor, requesting consideration of expansion of the MPO Board to account for the larger MPO planning area, which includes several new small cities and villages, and offering to participate in meetings on the issue. Golden suggested placing the item on a future agenda, and providing information on the population of the City of Madison, small cities and villages, and towns, and their representation on the Board. He said the Board would need to consider the process for changing makeup of the Board, including any regulatory requirements. McDonald responded that he has already put some information together and included it under item 11, future work items. Golden said Hanneman should be contacted to thank him for his letter and notify him that the issue will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Information prepared by staff should be mailed to him in advance of the meeting.
- Letter from City of Monona to U.S. Senators Feingold and Kohl, U.S. Representative Baldwin, Assemblyman Miller, Dane Co. Exec. Falk, and Mayor Cieslewicz, copied to McDonald, requesting STP-Urban funding in 2008 to reconstruct the first segment of Monona Drive. Golden requested that a letter be sent saying we'll review the project in the context of the TIP process.

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

None

5. Presentation on Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Verona Road/West Beltline Project between Todd Drive and USH 14 (Middleton) and between Nakoma Road and County Highway PD (Tom Lynch, Strand and Assoc.)

Lynch provided a power point presentation on the DEIS, which outlined the process, key issues identified by the public and staff, alternative transportation strategies considered to address these issues, the traffic and other impacts of the alternatives, and their costs. John Steiner, WisDOT District 1 Project Manager, was also present to answer questions. The roadway strategies for Verona Road (USH 151) include the urban roadway concept and the freeway alternative. The urban roadway concept modifies the Verona Road/Midvale Boulevard/Beltline interchange into a single-point interchange and maintains the current signalized intersections. Verona Road would be expanded to

six lanes from CTH PD and turn lanes would be added at intersections. The freeway alternative separates local traffic from regional traffic by providing a depressed freeway down the center of the roadway and provides a free flow system interchange with depressed ramps at the West Beltline. Local traffic would use a one-way pair system on both sides of the freeway. A new roadway connection could be provided extending Raymond Road across Verona Road into the Allied-Dunn's Marsh neighborhood. Both alternatives include a number of pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. With the freeway alternative, the Seminole Highway interchange ramps would need to be removed. The two Beltline alternatives are the addition of auxiliary lanes with ramp meters or combining these improvements with the addition of a third lane in each direction in the median between Verona Road and Mineral Point Road. The Beltline roadway strategy also includes four possible grade-separated crossings of the Beltline and interchange improvements.

Golden asked about the large amount of traffic diverted from Seminole Highway and Fish Hatchery Road. Lynch said the traffic volumes on Seminole Highway south of the Beltline are projected to decrease from 12,000 to 4,000 vehicles a day. North of the Beltline, the traffic reduction is more modest. He said the elimination of the ramps on Seminole Highway contributes to the traffic reduction, but the major cause is making Verona Road a freeway. Lynch noted that the City of Madison has prepared a physical improvement plan for the Allied-Dunn's Marsh neighborhood. It is a separate, but related effort partially funded by WisDOT. The plan proposes redevelopment of the Madison Plaza site. Golden added that the study seeks to "re-knit" the neighborhood and develop neighborhood-supporting commercial uses.

For the urban roadway alternative for Verona Road, Phetteplace asked how long it would take before the roadway reached Level of Service (LOS) E or F. Lynch said that alternative could handle around 15% more traffic than in 2000. Given the typical traffic growth of 2-3% per year, it would only take 5-7 years. Thus, if the project were completed in 2010, it would probably provide a level of service comparable to today. Golden asked about the Beltline traffic projections, remembering that the projections in the long-range plan were low. McDonald confirmed that the projections were on the conservative side. Lynch said most of the intersections on Verona Road are operating at LOS E or F now. For modeling purposes, Lynch said they added traffic in 10% increments to determine at what point traffic operations broke down. The freeway alternative was able to accommodate around 140% more traffic. Webber asked if the projected future congestion for the no build or urban roadway alternatives would result in a shift in mode of transportation and/or time of day of travel. Lynch said people do shift their time of travel to some extent. However, the traffic model forecasts only daily traffic volumes, and it is assumed that a certain percentage occurs during the peak period. Pike said it was 11.8%. McDonald noted that an enhanced transit system is in the model. He said you would need to provide better transit alternatives to see more vehicle trips diverted to transit.

Golden pointed out that the closing of the Seminole Highway interchange increases traffic on Nakoma Road, and Lynch confirmed this, indicating the increase was around 10%. Golden suggested some type of traffic calming as mitigation. In response to a question from Webber, Steiner and Lynch explained some of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements associated with the freeway alternative, including a path on the east side of Verona Road that connects to the frontage road. Golden recommended including a map of the proposed sidewalks and paths.

6. Consideration of Letter to the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation Requesting a Time Extension for Comments on the DEIS for the Verona Road/West Beltline Project

Motion by Matano, seconded by Webber, to approve letter to the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation requesting a time extension for comments on the DEIS for the Verona Road/West Beltline Project. Motion carried.

7. Consideration of Draft MPO Ranking of Candidate Statewide Multi-Modal Improvement Program (SMIP) Projects

Schaefer said there were six projects in the Madison area that were submitted for funding. Four of them were submitted for funding in the past including one project, the county bicycle safety education project, that previously received funding. Schaefer pointed out the location and explained the purpose of the projects. He said the Starkweather Creek overpass, Campus Drive path, and Capital City Trail overpass projects tied for first with the highest score, and staff had to prioritize these three. The Capital City Trail overpass was given the first priority, because of the serious safety issue there due to the steep grade on the west side of Fish Hatchery Road and the almost free flow nature of the intersection with CTH PD. It is a popular path used by many recreational, less-experienced bicyclists. The Campus Drive path project is in an important corridor with a high volume of bicyclists. However, there are other routes in this area--Linden Drive, the lakeshore path, and the wide paved shoulder on Campus Drive. In addition, the path only extends to Walnut Street, requiring bicyclists to enter into the campus at that point anyway. The Starkweather Creek overpass is part of a long-term project. The path would still need to be built and eventually an overpass of Aberg Avenue as well. It would provide some immediate benefits, enabling bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross East Washington and connect local street systems on each side of the roadway. It also benefits an environmental justice area, Darbo-Worthington neighborhood. There was discussion at the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) of possibly moving the Starkweather Creek project up to the #2 priority. However, the TCC decided to go with the staff recommendations for the three projects. There was discussion about the bicycle safety education project, which is the continuation of a project that has been ongoing for the last three years and has been implemented by the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin. The proposed project targets adults, middle school students, and educators, and includes production of materials, classes, as well as general outreach (e.g., at special events). The TCC recommended moving this project up to the #2 priority, because it is very unlikely that the Madison Area will receive funding for two high-cost projects. There is only \$9 million available statewide this funding cycle, because of the elimination of the STP-Discretionary program.

Webber said she could not vote, because the bicycle safety education project presented a conflict of interest for her. She said she wanted to comment on the other projects before leaving the room, which Golden recommended. Webber stated that the Junction Ridge overpass should be the #1 priority project in her opinion, because there is no other good alternative for getting across the Beltline within a reasonable distance. There is a very large shopping area north of Mineral Point Road, a large employment area north of Old Sauk Road, and a planned office and retail development south of Mineral Point Road. She said there is a low cost alternative to the Capital City Trail overpass--a pedestrian-activated signal combined with a no right turn on red, which has been used in other areas. There are alternative routes in the Campus Drive project area. She said her #2 priority would be the Starkweather Creek overpass of East Washington Avenue with the Campus Drive path and Capital City Trail overpass projects tied for #3. McDonald noted that the Capital City Trail overpass project also includes a bike lane on southbound Fish Hatchery Road at the CTH PD intersection to separate through traveling bicyclists from right-turning motor vehicle traffic.

McDonald said there might be alternate sources of funding for the Starkweather Creek overpass as part of the East Washington Avenue reconstruction. Bruskewitz asked if there might be safety program funds available for the Capital City Trail overpass. Schaefer said it probably would qualify for funding, but it would be very unlikely to be funded due to the high cost. Discussion followed. In response to a question from Bruskewitz, McDonald noted that the Junction Ridge overpass is just south of the Old Sauk Road interchange, which is not too bad for bicyclists at this point. Golden noted all of the planned development on the West side. Dye noted that the ranking for the Junction Ridge overpass reflected near-term vs. long-term development and resulting use. McDonald said alternative funding might be available for the Junction Ridge project when the Beltline is reconstructed, but that wouldn't occur in the next few years. In response to a question from Golden, McDonald said the question with the pedestrian-activated signal for the Capital City Trail overpass is

whether motorists would abide by it. Matano said the Junction Ridge overpass project does open up some regional connections and improve access for those neighborhoods. Golden said the possibility of alternative funding for the other projects was a major reason he feels comfortable with the staff recommendation. He said he might vote differently if it were five years from now.

Motion by Dye, seconded by Bruskewitz, to approve the recommendation of the TCC regarding the priority of the candidate SMIP projects with the Capital City Overpass project #1 and the bicycle safety education project #2. Motion carried.

8. Consideration of Appointments to the City of Madison’s Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission

Webber and Golden said they would both like to continue as the MPO representatives to Madison’s Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission. The MPO Board confirmed the appointments.

9. Follow-Up Discussion of Joint DCRPC & MPO Meeting

The item was deferred.

10. Status Report by MPO Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the MPO:

- **Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force**
- **USH 51 (I39/90 to McFarland) Phase II Study**

The item was deferred.

11. Discussion of Future Work Items

- **Election of Officers**
- **Possible Alternative Structures of MPO Board**
- **TDP Recommendations**
- **RTP Update Materials**
- **TIP Update Status**
- **Dane County Clean Air Coalition**

The item was deferred.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Bruskewitz, seconded by Webber, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.