

**Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
February 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

[Virtual Meeting hosted via Zoom](#)

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

1. Roll Call and Introductions

Members present: Paul Esser, Steve Flottmeyer, Dorothy Krause, Barbara Harrington-McKinney, Mark Opitz, Nasra Wehelie, Kristi Williams, Doug Wood, Tom Lynch, Margaret Bergamini, Jerry Mandli (joined during item 5), Grant Foster (joined during item 5), Gary Halverson (joined during item 5)

Members absent: Yogesh Chawla

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

Others present in an official capacity: Diane Paoni (WisDOT Planning), Philip Gritzmacher (City of Madison Transportation)

2. Approval of January 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Esser moved, Williams seconded, to approve January 5, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

- January 18, 2022 memo from WisDOT staff, and approved by FHWA staff, approving the 2022 UPWP Amendment approved by the MPO to include new federal funding
- January 25, 2022 letter from WisDOT approving the TIP Amendment approved by the MPO at the January meeting

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

None

5. Presentation on Draft Metro Transit Network Redesign Plan and Update on BRT Project

Schaefer said that Mike Cechvala was not able to attend, and that Philip Gritzmacher would be presenting on this item, and indicated that Ben Lyman from MPO staff, who has been working with the project team on the Network Redesign, was also available to answer questions. Schaefer reported that the City of Madison Transportation Policy and Planning Board (TPPB) had voted to release the draft plan for public comment on Monday, January 31, 2022.

Gritzmacher provided project background and context, including a review of the pre-Covid transit network, the need for re-evaluating service post-pandemic, its relationship to BRT, and the planning process to date. He then described the direction given by the TPPB after the Alternatives phase of the project, and the areas targeted for adjustment based on that feedback. He then provided an overview of public feedback received to date, and discussed the next steps for engaging the public, developing a modified service plan map, adoption, and implementation.

Alder Wehelie asked for information on the following: (1) feedback regarding desire for pre-Covid routes and likelihood of those routes being restored; and (2) how survey groups were identified, which did not include the west side. She also commented that the proposed elimination of service on much of Odana Road will create barriers for immigrant-owned businesses in that area. Gritzmacher began by responding

to the second question, and clarified that area meetings were still being scheduled, and he had only provided examples of areas where the meetings were already confirmed. On the question of pre-Covid route restoration, he clarified that one of the purposes of the upcoming public engagement is to receive feedback on whether or not the proposed routes would provide the desired service. Lynch provided information regarding the operational restraints posed by a driver shortage, and explained steps being taken to improve the hiring process to ensure that sufficient drivers are available to increase service hours in 2023. He then reiterated the tradeoffs between a longer walk to more frequent service with fewer transfers required, and a shorter walk to less frequent service with more transfers required. He how the Network Redesign to improve access for low-income individuals and people of color. Alder Wehelie asked about the source of the poverty data using for analysis. Gritzmacher responded that it was US Census data. Wehelie asked if Metro was open to adjusting the proposed draft system based on public feedback, and Gritzmacher responded that was the purpose of the public engagement.

Krause requested that the focus of messaging be twofold: (1) transit is not just for poor people; and (2) people can leave their car at home and use the bus for most transportation needs. She then asked how the project had involved the Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission (STC), Metro, and Public Works. Gritzmacher referred to the City of Madison's Travel Demand Management (TDM) initiative, which will address the messaging aspect of her request. Lyman stated that two presentations on the network redesign had been given to the STC, and he is on the STC and able to pass on relevant information between that body and the network redesign team. He then described how the county transportation programs and Metro service area are generally exclusive of each other, so changes to Metro service do not affect county programming or services. He then referred back to Alder Wehelie's question about public engagement meetings and offered to put her in contact with project sub-consultant Urban Assets, which is scheduling those meetings. Krause clarified that she was wondering about how the redesign would affect the Bus Buddies program. Lyman indicated that he would follow up with them directly, but that the redesign should give them more potential destinations within a given time period and that they should be able to adapt to the new system.

Opitz asked about the level of detail of information to be presented to the public during the upcoming meetings. Gritzmacher indicated that the general public meetings would have more content than what he had presented tonight, and that the small area meetings would focus more on the network in that area.

6. Update on *Connect Greater Madison Regional Transportation Plan 2050*

Schaefer provided an update on the RTP schedule, and asked the board to provide feedback on the timeline for adoption after his presentation. He reviewed the draft plan goals, which have been revised slightly but are substantially the same as the goals in the current plan, and the performance measures to be used for evaluation of the plan. Schaefer then reviewed the travel modeling scenario that serves as the foundation for the plan recommendations. It includes the future planned bike and transit networks and roadway capacity projected programmed in the TIP. He then reviewed travel model forecast statistics for some of the performance measures, comparing the 2016 base year and 2050 forecast year.

Hoesly described the update to the Congestion Management Process (CMP). It was developed in 2011 and is being updated as part of the RTP update. She provided an overview of the CMP network, CMP objectives, and CMP performance measures and targets. Wood asked how a roadway with Level of Service (LOS) "Mid E" would function. Schaefer described the LOS D and E categories and explained that the line between E and F represents the capacity of a roadway. He said Mid E targets were set because it is not practical or desirable to achieve LOS D on many major arterial roadways in question. Lynch confirmed that this is a change, but an acknowledgement that the community is willing to live with a little more congestion, given the trade-offs (cost, ROW, impacts to other modes, etc.) required to expand

facilities and ameliorate congestion during peak periods. Hoesly continued her presentation of proposed performance measures, and then turned to congestion management strategies.

Schaefer raised the question of changing the May meeting date in order to allow the required 30 day comment period on the draft plan following the board approval to release it following the April meeting. Opitz stated that the May meeting could be moved from the 4th to the 11th unless other concerns or conflicts were raised.

7. Report on Federal Certification Review to Be Held on February 16-17

Schaefer explained that USDOT is conducting its required 4-year review of the MPO to ensure the MPO is meeting federal planning requirements. The reviews result in recommendations to the MPO on best practices and opportunities for improvement. He described the series of staff and public meetings scheduled for this review. USDOT will present to the board when the report is complete. Schaefer reviewed the Disposition of 2017 Federal Certification Review Recommendations and noted that no corrective actions were identified during the 2017 review. He pointed out that changes to the relationship between the MPO and City of Madison were not pursued, but staff believed things were working well. However, if the board wanted to pursue this that could be done.

Lynch noted that many aspects of how the MPO was established were political products of their time, and that it is unlikely that the MPO agreement would be revisited. Schaefer provided background on the MPO/RPC relationship. He acknowledged the concern expressed by some that the MPO is biased toward the City of Madison due to the city serving as the MPO's fiscal agent and providing staff. Opitz stated that aside from occasional situations where language does not acknowledge other communities, he thinks that the MPO does a good job of operating in an unbiased manner.

8. Report on Draft WisDOT Plan for Soliciting New Local Program Projects to Utilize Funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill

Schaefer provided an overview of WisDOT's plan for soliciting project applications, which includes a solicitation for projects to be constructed next year and another solicitation for projects in 2024-2027. Schaefer indicated that given the short time frame involved, the MPO may decide to move up a project that has been awarded funding in a future year, and then use that future year funding for a new project. Lynch asked if projects that are already in line for funding need to re-submit applications; Schaefer stated that approved projects do not need to re-apply, but if approved projects could be let by this fall to let him know. Schaefer said scheduled projects that are currently short on funding could potentially be awarded some or all of this funding. Options for use of the funding will be presented to the board. Mandli clarified that although the IIJA has been signed into law, there is no appropriation to fund the law yet.

9. Status Report on Capital Area RPC Activities

Schaefer noted that staff are working to plan a joint MPO/CARPC meeting this spring/summer.

10. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting is March 2, 2022 at 6:30 PM.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Lynch, seconded by Krause, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:28.