

ARTICLES

Input Sought on Draft Bicycle Transportation Plan Recommendations

The Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MATPB) is preparing a new *Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County*. The bicycle plan, which was last [updated in 2000](#), will update and expand upon the bikeway system plan included in the MPO's multi-modal [2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update](#), but it will be comprehensive and will also cover on-street and end-of-trip facilities, and address education, encouragement, and other aspects of bicycle planning. The planning horizon for the Bicycle Transportation Plan is 2050.



The Bicycle Transportation Plan is designed to serve as a blueprint for continuing to improve bicycling conditions and increase bicycling levels throughout Dane County. It seeks to provide a framework for cooperation among state agencies, Dane County, and local governments in planning for and developing bicycle facilities and programs. It is also intended to educate citizens and policy makers about bicycle transportation issues and the needs of bicyclists, as well as present resources for planning, designing, and maintaining bicycle facilities.

The plan will include comprehensive bicycle facility network needs and recommendations and prioritize major multi-use path projects from a regional perspective. The plan also will include a new bicycle functional classification system that shows how shared-use paths, major streets with bike lanes, local streets, and other bikeways fit together to form a network of primary and secondary bikeways. This will help planners and engineers identify gaps and deficiencies in the bikeway network. It will also be used to support implementation of a new bicycle wayfinding system.

MATPB staff have prepared draft policy and facility recommendations and will be gathering input throughout the spring and summer of 2015. The draft plan recommendations were guided by policy and technical committees and supported by analysis of existing conditions and trends. The recommendations also reflect other public input received to date. The Bicycle Transportation Plan is being developed concurrently with the City of Madison's transportation master plan [Madison in Motion](#). *Madison in Motion* will identify what the City of Madison and others must do to become a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented city.

To learn more about the Bicycle Transportation Plan, visit the [plan website](#). There, you can find draft recommendations and maps as well as provide input through our [new interactive mapping tool](#). With the new mapping tool, you can turn layers on and off and zoom in closer to see the detail of the maps as well as provide location-specific comments and questions. Also, look for us at various events this summer where we will have plan materials available.

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The 2015 Dane County Bicycle Map is now available. This map is designed to assist bicyclists in identifying the safest, most enjoyable routes throughout the county. The map is available at many local bicycle shops and libraries. Online and interactive versions of the Dane County Bicycle Map are available [here](#) for use with computer and smartphone browsers or with a free downloadable app. An API is also available for custom application development.

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Comprehensive Revision Completed to the MPO's STP – Urban Program Policies and Project Scoring Criteria

The MATPB approved a comprehensive set of revisions to the agency's policies and project scoring criteria for selection of local projects funded under the Federal Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP – Urban). The new policies and criteria, which will be used for the current 2016-2020 program cycle, are designed to better align with MATPB's goals and policy objectives in its long-range regional transportation plan and to provide more detailed guidance about how the different types of eligible projects will be scored under the program. Applications to the MPO are due in late June. The MATPB currently receives about \$6.86 million per year in STP Urban funding.



The STP – Urban program is one of two major federal funding programs for which the MPO receives a direct allocation of funding to distribute to priority projects. The other is the new Transportation Alternatives Program, the primary source of funding for major bicycle/pedestrian projects. The MPO has historically used most of its STP – Urban program funding for local arterial street construction and reconstruction projects, but a wide variety of capital projects are eligible to be funded under the program. These include transit vehicle or other transit capital projects, bicycle/pedestrian projects, and infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems (ITS) capital improvements, as well as travel demand management programs such as the MPO's Ridesharing Etc. program.

The comprehensive review of the program policies and scoring criteria was the first since the original project scoring criteria were first developed and adopted in the late 1990s. A workgroup comprised of members from the MPO Policy Board and Technical Coordinating Committee assisted MPO staff with the effort. The new policies and project scoring criteria are described in the [Selection Process for STP – Urban Projects](#) document. This document also explains the process for developing the overall Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the process used for selecting STP – Urban projects as part of the TIP process.

Among the major changes to the program policies is a reduction in the minimum local cost share from 50% to 40% for new projects with a construction cost of \$600,000 or more. Effective in 2010, the MPO had previously increased the minimum local cost share from the federally mandated 20% to 50% to stretch the funding over more projects. The move to a 40% cost share balances that goal with a goal to support projects providing regional benefits. It also mitigates the risk for project sponsors of costs ending up being higher than estimated when the project is initially approved. The MPO also adopted minimum project costs, including \$600,000 for roadway projects and \$300,000 for bicycle/pedestrian projects. The other major policy change was to set a goal of using up to 10% of available funding over time for relatively small-scale projects (those with a maximum cost of \$1.2 million), which will provide smaller communities with a better opportunity to secure funding for their projects. The MPO also added a program objective to strive to achieve geographic equity in funding of projects over time.

The new project scoring criteria provide more detailed guidance on how projects will be scored using different criteria tailored to each of the major types of potential projects (roadway, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, or intelligent transportations systems). The criteria for the different types of projects all use a similar framework of scoring categories (safety, congestion mitigation, system preservation, etc.), but the weighting for the categories is in some cases different to reflect the importance of the category to the particular type of project. For example, system preservation is important for roadway and transit vehicle projects, but not for bicycle/pedestrian projects because only new facilities are eligible for funding.

Work Underway on Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems Plan

The MATPB is working on a *Regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Strategic Plan*. The purpose of the plan is to create a road map for the implementation of an integrated system of ITS strategies that will enhance the efficiency and safety of the transportation system and achieve other regional transportation system goals. The plan will focus on the arterial street system and transit, bicyclist, and pedestrian needs, and it will build upon plans already completed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation that focus primarily on the freeway system in the Madison area.



With increasing growth, geographic constraints that limit opportunities for roadway capacity expansion, and the large and growing number of special events, preparation of an ITS Plan for the Madison area makes sense. ITS strategies are particularly effective in managing traffic and travel needs during special events, incidents such as crashes, and adverse weather events. These types of incidents create a large percentage of the traffic congestion in urban areas.

The plan will identify and prioritize ITS strategies and specific projects to satisfy needs, including optimizing the roadway system and transit services, providing timely information to traffic management and responder agencies and the public, and assisting in the safe and efficient response to emergencies and incidents. A major need for the MPO is the acquisition of data that will allow for better measurement and monitoring of the performance of the transportation system. This information can then be used for planning and project programming purposes. The ITS plan will also assist in phasing projects based on costs and benefits as well as technical and institutional issues.

So what is ITS? It is the application of integrated sensor, computer, electronic, and communications technologies and management strategies to increase the safety and efficiency of the transportation system. It includes technologies such as traffic responsive or adaptive signal systems that automatically change signal timing based on traffic flows, cameras, vehicle locator systems for transit and other vehicles, and dynamic message signs. ITS isn't just about technology though. It is about using that technology to improve traffic and transit operations, share data and improve agency decision making, and provide information to the public to meet the travel needs of ordinary people.

Two workshops have been held with staff from agencies involved in traffic management, construction or maintenance, transit operations, law enforcement, and emergency management. Workshop attendees were asked for their input on needs that ITS might be able to address and to discuss the roles of the different agencies in providing transportation or ITS services, as well as to discuss how they would use those services. A project advisory committee has been set up to get additional, ongoing input.

A plan vision statement and draft ITS goals, objectives, and performance measures have been prepared to guide the planning process. The next steps are to finalize the ITS inventory and the concept of operations, which outlines how the ITS systems will be used. Following that, the more detailed "ITS architecture" will be developed and an implementation plan will be prepared identifying recommended strategies and projects.

The plan is anticipated to be completed by the end of the summer. Look for more information on the plan on the MPO's [ITS Plan webpage](#) in the coming months.