

Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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You receive this newsletter because you are identified as person and/or agency who is considered important to the implementation of Metro COG projects and programs. If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter or you wish to begin receiving this newsletter electronically, please contact Savanna Leach at:

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Future of Transportation?

One of our main focuses at Metro COG is how to best anticipate and plan for the transportation needs of the FM metropolitan area. We do this through a number of ways including demographic forecasts, traffic counts, and land use analyses - each of which give us a better sense of the speed at which the area is growing and how that growth might be reflected in traffic and transportation needs. But what does the future of transportation hold? It is difficult to say for certain but a number of advances and innovations may dramatically change how we view transportation demands in the future.

One of the changes we are already beginning to see is the rise of autonomous vehicles, including self-driving cars and driverless trucks. These vehicles can think faster and smarter than a human driver and have the ability to look in all directions at once. Vehicles equipped with sensors and cameras have already been deployed in the United States, Europe, and Asia and are anticipated to move into the marketplace in the next three to five years. Autonomous vehicles may dramatically change how we plan our cities, from gas stations, restaurants, rest stops, motels, and businesses catering to long-distance drivers.



Another transportation innovation getting more attention these days are urban transport pods. Already being tested in London and Abu Dhabi, these single and two-seat pods move on their own over a pre-described route and allow users to interact with



the pod using a touchscreen in the windshield. It is envisioned that this driverless public transport system could greatly improve parking and congestion issues in urban areas while giving riders more flexibility in transport options.

Other technologies such as the Hyperloop, a low-pressure tube through which levitated pods would move at up to 800 mph, is being tested in five countries. One planned route from San Francisco to Los Angeles would take just 30 minutes to complete. It is the goal of Hyperloop to begin moving cargo by 2020 and passengers by 2021.

How these technologies may affect the FM metropolitan area remain to be seen. But having familiarity with future transport solutions will enable planners, engineers, and public officials to better anticipate new modes of transportation and make better planning decisions.



Metro COG is committed to ensuring all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability/handicap, sexual orientation, or income status have access to Metro COG's programs and services. Meeting facilities will be accessible to mobility impaired individuals. Metro COG will make a good faith effort to accommodate requests for translation services for meeting proceedings and related materials. Please contact Savanna Leach, Metro COG Executive Secretary at 701-232-3242 at least two days in advance of the meeting if any special accommodations are required for any member of the public to be able to participate in the meeting.

Upcoming Metro COG Projects in 2017

Metro COG is set to begin a number of new planning projects in the FM metropolitan area in 2017. These projects will address a variety of issues and needs in the region and lead to better planning decisions by local and state officials in the years to come.

Cass County Comprehensive and Transportation Plan

The Cass County Comprehensive and Transportation Plan, an update of the 2005 plan, will be a 20-year vision and roadmap for Cass County's future and a framework for the physical, social, and economic development of the County. The plan will guide decisions on issues such as land use, transportation, utilities, floodplain/diversion development, rural transit, and intergovernmental cooperation. It will also set standards for roads and other capital improvements, identify how they will be paid for, and establish the basis for zoning and development regulations.

MATBUS Transit Hub Analysis and Development Strategy

With the completion of the 2016-2020 Transit Development Plan and in anticipation of future transit network expansions, MATBUS and Metro COG will be conducting a study to investigate the need for additional transit hub facilities in the region. This study will also look at improvement needs at existing facilities, analyze operations at current transit hubs, identify site requirements, evaluate growth and development trends, and determine square footage needs for new transit facilities.



Moorhead ADA Transition Plan

State and local governments around the country must comply with provisions in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This plan will be used to assess ADA compliance in the City of Moorhead by developing a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian facilities, identifying non-compliant locations, and developing a program for remedial repairs in order to bring facilities into compliance. The focus will be on pedestrian infrastructure in the public right-of-way, including sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian crossings, and obstructions. The plan will take into account a synthesis of practices, including best practices, on the various approaches cities and transportation agencies use to address ADA compliance issues, including data inventory, asset condition assessment, and programming of asset improvements.



17th Avenue South Corridor Study

Metro COG, in cooperation with the City of Fargo, will be evaluating existing conditions and future needs along the 17th Avenue S corridor in Fargo. This corridor is of key interest to both the City of Fargo and Metro COG as the level of service (LOS), which measures the quality of traffic service on a roadway, is expected to erode without future improvements. The project study area will include 17th Avenue S from 5th Street to the West Fargo city limits. The objective of this study will be to analyze current traffic operations and conditions, identify potential improvements for the corridor at key locations, and analyze impacts of the potential improvements with respect to cost, traffic operations, transit, safety, bicycling, and pedestrian movement.



PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!

Look for this symbol

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Upcoming Metro COG Projects in 2017 (continued)

13th Avenue/County Road 26 Corridor Study

Metro COG, the City of West Fargo, and Cass County will be conducting a corridor study along 13th Avenue S/County Road 26 from Main Avenue near the Red River Fairgrounds to the Fargo/West Fargo border at 17th Street E. This study will include a review of existing and future conditions along the corridor and show how investment needs will address roadway system performance, improve safety for motorists and pedestrians, and support local economic and community development.



Regional Railroad Crossing Safety Study

In October 2016, Metro COG began the Regional Railroad Crossing Safety Study. Part of the study will include a review of current at-grade crossings throughout the region. This review will utilize a hazard index developed by the Federal Railway Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) which applies weightings based on attributes of the crossing to equations of train and vehicle speeds with the number of trains and vehicles per day. Accident history at crossings will also be factored in.

The study will also look at projected development patterns and traffic growth, and jurisdictional land use plans. Areas of particular interest include locations of industrial growth that might be key surface freight corridors in the future, as well as other corridors that are anticipated to experience significant commuter traffic increases, leading to an increase in at-grade highway/rail exposure rates throughout the planning horizon. The study will also collaborate with Metro COG's Regional Freight Plan and incorporate commodity flow data that is available.

For more information on this study, please contact Dave Burns at burns@fmmetrocog.org.



Fargo/West Fargo Parking Requirements Study

The cities of Fargo and West Fargo will be working with Metro COG to evaluate the cities' current standards for off-street parking and access management. This study will look at how non-auto travel, including transit use, cycling, and walking, may affect new and existing developments and propose recommendations that better reflect existing parking demand and market trends. Safety concerns as they relate to the placement of driveways and other means of access management will also be analyzed.

For more information on these and other upcoming projects, please contact Bill Christian at 701.232.3242 or email at christian@fmmetrocog.org; or see the 2017-2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) at www.fmmetrocog.org.

Alternate Route Guidebook

Metro COG is set to begin development of an Alternate Route Guidebook for the FM metropolitan area. This guidebook will provide plan for relieving congestion resulting from an event that causes either a significant or total roadway capacity reduction or excessive, sustained traffic demand. These events may include a traffic incident, natural disaster, or emergency which render a roadway facility impassable. Diverting traffic to a parallel roadway specified in a carefully planned alternate route guidebook provides an effective, temporary response to facilitating increased mobility and improved travel time reliability along a corridor.

The function and operation of alternate routes should not be confused with evacuation routes. Alternate routes, when implemented, must accommodate both traffic diverted from another facility and normal, day-to-day background traffic on the route. Evacuation routes are typically required to move large numbers of people away from a particular location.

The planning process typically involves three phases:

- Alternate route selection: choosing preliminary alternate routes and evaluating each route to determine the optimal choice
- Alternate route plan development: developing information to incorporate in the alternate route plan, including information on alternate route implementation.
- Traffic management planning: planning for information to be disseminated to motorists during implementation and for traffic control, including capacity enhancements needed to accommodate traffic to, from, and on the alternate route.

This guidebook will be informed by a variety of stakeholders including engineering/public works departments, law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, transit administrators, and elected officials. For more information, please contact Bill Christian at christian@fmmetrocog.org.



West Fargo 2.0 and Downtown InFocus - Comprehensive Planning in the FM Metropolitan Area

Comprehensive planning is a process which determines a community's goals and aspirations for the future. The outcome of this planning process is a comprehensive plan which dictates public policy in terms of transportation, land use, housing, utilities, recreation, and economic development. This plan becomes a guiding document for cities and counties through which zoning and other land development decisions are based upon. Currently, there are two comprehensive plans being developed in the FM metropolitan area: one for the City of West Fargo and the other for Downtown Fargo.



DOWNTOWN INFOCUS

A BLUEPRINT FOR FARGO'S CORE



West Fargo 2.0 - Comprehensive Plan Update

West Fargo 2.0: Redefining Tomorrow is an update to the city's 2008 comprehensive plan. Through this plan, city staff and residents will be deciding on future housing densities and neighborhood design, what types of park facilities are needed, what residents want in a downtown, what cultural and recreational amenities are needed, and how the city could direct future developers when planning architecture. At recent public input events in November and January, other ideas expressed have included fostering community gardens and sustainable green spaces, expanding the city's library, more walking and biking trails, and taking a closer look at a potential performing arts facility for the region.

The next public input opportunity for West Fargo 2.0, dubbed "Planapalooza," will occur from April 20 through April 25. During that time, planners from Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC) will

have an office open in West Fargo where residents will be invited to stop by to provide additional input and learn more about the plan.

Downtown InFocus - A Blueprint for Fargo's Core

Downtown InFocus is a comprehensive and open planning process to envision the future of downtown Fargo. This plan will serve as a blueprint downtown's streets, buildings, infrastructure, and built environment which will enhance the area's character and uniqueness. Since July, the consultant team headed by Interface Studio LLC has been collecting data and asking for public input about housing, transportation, parking, open space, infrastructure, retail services, arts, jobs, social services, and more. The focus has now transitioned to crafting a vision for the future grounded in the voice of the community and developing strategies for change that echo the public's hopes for downtown.

The next series of public events for Downtown InFocus will occur towards the end of March, with a draft plan in late April.

For more information or to get involved in these plans, please visit www.wf2point0.com or www.fargoinfocus.org.



Transportation Club of Fargo-Moorhead

The Transportation Club of Fargo-Moorhead is a non-profit organization that serves transportation professionals and industry representatives in the FM metropolitan area. For over 75 years, the Transportation Club has sought to promote and enhance the transportation industry through community events and other educational programs and trainings. The club also works closely with area schools and technical colleges and provides annual scholarships to outstanding students in transportation-related fields.

The Transportation Club is affiliated with the Fargo-Moorhead Safety 20 Group, designed for safety directors and other stakeholders with an interest in safety and security within the transportation industry. The club also works with the North Dakota Motor Carriers Association, a leading education and advocacy organization for the transportation industry in North Dakota.

If you would like to learn more about the Transportation Club of Fargo-Moorhead or to find out about upcoming events, please contact Mark Wolter at 701.277.5496 or email at mark.wolter@midnitexpress.com.

