

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:

leach@fmmetrocog.org

Welcome to Anna Pierce!



Metro COG welcomed a new staff member, Anna Pierce as the new Assistant Planner on December 1. Anna will be coordinating the geographic information system (GIS) efforts across the metropolitan planning area. One of her first tasks has been to review the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) performance measures. Anna has also been helping out on various other projects with staff.

Anna is originally from Minneapolis, but came to NDSU to study Landscape Architecture. Anna graduated in 2014 with a B.LA and a B.S. Environmental Design and worked at local residential design company in West Fargo for a year. Then she expanded her skills by relocating to Baltimore, MD, where she further developed her GIS skills and worked with regional MPOs and local governments on transportation planning projects. Now, Anna is back in the Midwest working at Metro COG!

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.

2018 TTC and Policy Board Dates

Transportation Technical Committee 10:00 a.m. Metro COG Office	Policy Board 4:00 p.m. Metro COG Office
January 11	January 18
February 8	February 15
March 8	March 15
April 12	April 19
May 10	May 17
June 14	June 21
July 12	July 19
August 9	August 16
September 13	September 20
October 11	October 18
November 8	November 15
December 13	December 20

Metro COG encourages the public and all individuals to attend these and all other public meetings. Please visit www.fmmetrocog.org for more information on these and other committees.



PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!

Look for this symbol

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Policy Board 2018 Officers

- Arland Rasmussen.....Chair
- Jenny Mongeau.....Vice Chair

Metro COG Staff:

- Adam Altenburg.....Community and Transp. Analyst
- Dan Farnsworth.....Transp. Planner
- Savanna Leach.....Executive Secretary
- Michael Maddox.....Sr. Transp. Planner
- Anna Pierce.....Assistant Planner

2019 Long Range Transportation Plan

Metropolitan planning organizations like Metro COG are required by federal law to develop a long range transportation plan (LRTP) at least every five years. This document includes strategies, actions, and projects that will lead to "an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods." Federal funds cannot be used for regional projects or services unless they are consistent with an adopted plan. The LRTP must also be financially constrained to a reasonably expected level of transportation funding, taking into account funding for operations and maintenance of existing transportation facilities.

Every LRTP must be shaped by an overarching public engagement process that provides multiple avenues for the public and stakeholders to be informed, participate, provide input, and interact with Metro COG and members of its study team. Looking to continue its successful regional planning efforts, Metro COG is looking ahead to broaden the scope of public engagement for the 2019 LRTP update. In addition to traditional public input meetings, community transportation assessment surveys, and social media, Metro COG will also be developing informational videos explaining technical planning information in an easy-to-follow format.

Metro COG also plans on more grassroots outreach efforts during events held in the community, efforts geared towards a range of stakeholders that have not traditionally been involved in previous planning efforts.

System performance will be a core component of the plan which will be based in part on community expectations for mobility and safety. Travel demand models used to forecast traffic flows in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area will be used to evaluate roadway improvements and potential MATBUS and freight systems needs. A range of possible multimodal transportation strategies and project alternatives will be evaluated for potential implementation based on a variety of needs identified, including performance measures and environmental justice needs.



Short-, mid-, and long-term project priorities identified in the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan Metro COG



Participants in a public input meeting during the 2014 Long Range Transportation Plan Photo by Patrick Hollister

Metro COG is looking forward to starting the LRTP update process in early 2018. As the metropolitan area evolves, the 2019 plan will give jurisdictions an opportunity to reexamine their values towards relevant modes of transportation including pedestrians, bicyclists, automobile drivers, transit users, and freight shippers, as well as provide an opportunity to consider how the regional transportation system should look and function in the future.

Passing of Bill Christian

As many of you know, Bill Christian, Executive Director of Metro COG, passed away on October 17. On behalf of all of us at Metro COG, we would again like to thank everyone in the community, especially the

members of our Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee, for their support and also extend our sincere and heartfelt condolences to Bill's family and loved ones.

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facebook.com/fmmetrocog

MATBUS Transit Facility Analysis & Development Strategy

Since August 2017, MATBUS and Metro COG have been working on a transit facility analysis and development strategy. Part of the reason for this study is that the current rolling stock of MATBUS has grown substantially since the Metro Transit Garage (MTG) was first designed in 2006. Growth in the fleet has resulted from continued increases in ridership and also changing demands of MATBUS ridership, including growth in paratransit services. New route development and increased headways on several routes has resulted in a greatly expanded rolling stock of buses and other transit vehicles. Understanding future system growth is critical to managing facility expansion at the MTG, evaluation of the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) in downtown Fargo, and identifying improvements to future major and minor system hubs - including existing hubs at West Acres Mall and the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead.

In addition to fleet growth and changes in ridership, the size and diversity of MATBUS staff has evolved greatly over the past decade - with additional changes anticipated in the years ahead. Changes to MATBUS staff not only relates to the number of employees; changes are also anticipated based on decisions related to contractors and the potential transition to a more unified administrative structure to support a transit authority for the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. Understanding the administrative and organizational framework for MATBUS is critical to planning for future facilities at both the GTC and MTG.

The recently completed 2016-2020 Transit Development Plan (TDP) outlines a conservative, yet thoughtful, expansion of MATBUS routes in the metropolitan area. Some of these improvements are imminent and programmed in Metro COG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). As part of the analysis and development strategy, many of the route concepts in the TDP will be evaluated for consistency with future needs of MATBUS - specifically, their impacts on existing and future facilities at both bus stops and transit hubs. Additionally, more exploration is needed on longer term route concepts and operational service levels. Understanding

future operational changes assists in a better understanding of how to improve and expand transit facilities, and also accounts for more progressive system facility needs for MATBUS at both at the stop level and at minor and major system hubs in the area.



West Acres Transit Hub

Photo by KLU

Alternate Route/Traffic Incident Management Guidebook

Metro COG, along with safety professionals and other stakeholders in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, has developed an Alternate Route and Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Guidebook for the region. The primary goal of the guidebook is to assist officials and emergency responders in streamlining response times to emergency situations where the diversion of traffic to alternate routes is required. The guidebook allows responders to confidently divert traffic along pre-approved routes that will be devoid of obstacles or impediments to large volumes and types of traffic, including semi-trailer trucks.

The guidebook contains a series of maps which highlight which alternate/detour routes are to be initiated in the event of a closure for an identified section of interstate or highway in the area. Items such as traffic signals, railroad crossings, stop-controlled intersections, and other items of note along the alternate route are identified on the maps along with where personnel should be posted to assist drivers.

Major traffic incidents and events requiring alternate routes to be employed do not occur often in the region but having established detour routes is helpful should an emergency situation occur. Transportation agencies and first responders in the region can be confident that the alternate routes designated in the guidebook will support the initial diversion of traffic, helping to decrease the chance of secondary incidents and provide a safer incident scene for first responders.



Alternate Route/TIM Guidebook Graphic by HDR



Website Update

Metro COG is excited to let you know that we are beginning the process of updating our website. The new site will have a new design, layout, and will allow you to better find current and previous plans and studies we have worked on. The site will also have links to important local and regional transportation projects in the region as well demographic data, maps, and community services. Look for these and more changes at www.fmmetrocog.org in the coming months!

Comprehensive & Transportation Plans - Dilworth and Casselton

Metro COG is currently working with the cities of Dilworth, MN and Casselton, ND in updating their comprehensive plans. These documents serve a number of broad purposes for cities and counties. They are designed to guide the future actions of a community based upon a long-term vision for preferred growth over the course of 20 to 30 years. They also provide a foundation for land development regulations, including zoning and subdivision decisions, and offer guidance to landowners, developers, and city officials on future land uses and development policies. But most importantly, they reflect the community's goals, aspirations, and expectations for general well-being and a higher quality of life.

Both of these comprehensive and transportation plans will provide blueprints for future activities while helping to guide prospective actions by both the cities and the communities. It is envisioned that, through the plan process, community goals, objectives, and policies will be developed which will incorporate long-range considerations with short-range decisions and actions. With both of these plans, citizens will be asked their thoughts and opinions on ways to improve the quality of their communities, taking into account social, economic, and physical factors.



Current land use map for the City of Dilworth

Metro COG

Moorhead 12th Avenue South Corridor Study

Metro COG and the City of Moorhead will soon be kicking off a corridor study along 12th Avenue South, from the Red River to Main Avenue. This corridor is of key interest to both Moorhead and Metro COG as it is a vital east-west arterial roadway in the area. The study



12th Avenue from the Olson Skyway at Concordia College Photo by Birgit Smith

will analyze current and future traffic conditions, identify potential vehicle level-of-service (LOS) improvements, and examine the impacts of potential improvements with respect to traffic operations, safety, transit needs, and bicycle and pedestrian movements - including the possibility of bike lanes or other facilities. The study will also take a look at issues such as recent vehicle crashes, on-street parking, access management, land use, railroad impacts, and right-of-way needs.

It is anticipated that the final document will include an in-depth analysis of different planning-level layouts, as well as preliminary cost estimates for potential improvement alternatives. Public input will also be a key component of the plan as Moorhead and Metro COG seek feedback on needs, issues, alternatives, benefits, and constraints.

Title VI Report

As a recipient of federal funds, Metro COG is required to comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related regulations and statutes. Metro COG's commitment to the Title VI program assures that no person or groups(s) of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability/handicap, and income status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by Metro COG, regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. Metro COG also assures that every effort will be made to prevent discrimination through the impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. In addition, Metro COG will provide meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Metro COG staff is currently developing the 2018 Title VI Report. The report will evaluate the demographics of the planning area, summarize the public outreach activities Metro COG participated in over the past year, identify any Title VI complaints, and provide an overview of the organization, staffing, and structure of Metro COG and its decision makers.

If you ever have any comments or concerns, please contact Metro COG's Title VI Coordinator, Adam Altenburg, at 701.232.3242 ext. 34 or email at altenburg@fmmetrocog.org.

