

114th Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting
February 10th, 2021 – 3:00pm
Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Dan Farnsworth, Chair, Metro COG
Patrick Hollister, PartnerSHIP 4 Health
Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth
Christine Holland, River Keepers
Grace Puppe, Cass County
Kim Citrowske, City of Moorhead Planning
Deputy Chief Joe Anderson, Fargo Police Department
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation
Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Barret Voigt, City of Horace
Tyler Kirchner, Fargo Park District
Andrew Wrucke, City of West Fargo Engineering
Chris Garty, Citizen Representative
Maegin Elshaug, City of Fargo Planning
Matthew Jacobson, Clay County Planning
Jonathan Atkins, City of Moorhead Engineering
Jane Butzer, MnDOT District 4
Malachi Petersen, City of West Fargo Planning (proxy for Tim Solberg)
Jeremy Gorden, City of Fargo Engineering

Others Present:

Cindy Gray, Metro COG
Luke Champa, Metro COG
David Sweeney, SRF
Shawn Vasichek, Citizen
Connor Cox, Toole Design

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 3:02 pm. Attendees introduced themselves.

Toward the end of the introductions, an issue occurred and all participants lost access to Zoom. After Metro COG troubleshooted the issue, a new link had to be sent out to all members of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee. The meeting was restarted around 3:13 pm.

2. Approve minutes from December 9th, 2020 meeting

A motion to approve the December 9th minutes was made by P. Mastera and seconded by T. Kirchner. The minutes were passed unanimously with no edits.

3. Public input opportunity

No public comments were made during this opportunity.

4. Update on ND legislation regarding bicycles

D. Farnsworth provided an update on the status of two bicycle-related bills that are currently going through the ND legislative process. The bills are as follows:

- HB 1252 – Yielding & stopping while operating a bicycle
- HB 1290 – Passing a bicycle while driving a vehicle

Both bills were introduced in January at the start of the ND legislative session. Both bills were passed by the ND House and have been sent to the Senate for consideration.

D. Farnsworth noted that he found the language in the latest version of HB 1252 rather confusing. Namely, the bill specifies different rules when riding on “a roadway having three or more lanes of moving traffic” versus “a roadway with two or fewer lanes of moving traffic.” Another thing noticed in the revised version in the bill was that the language regarding bicycle conduct at a red traffic signal was removed. B. Voigt also found the language of HB 1252 to be confusing. Metro COG will reach out to the author of the bill to express concerns about the confusing nature of the language of HB 1252 as currently written.

5. 2021 F-M Metropolitan Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

D. Farnsworth stated that every five years Metro COG conducts a bicycle & pedestrian plan for the F-M Metro area. The last plan was completed in 2016. D. Farnsworth noted that Metro COG will begin the process of soliciting a consulting firm to conduct the 2021 Plan shortly and wanted to get the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee’s thoughts on what they’d like to see addressed in the Plan. Comments from Committee members are as follows:

- P. Hollister asked that the Plan have the Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community logo on the cover similar to the 2016 Plan. He also suggested identifying locations for future bike racks and future bike repair stations if feasible.
- B. Voigt suggested that the Plan should include addressing barriers that may keep people from biking and walking. These barriers could be social barriers as well as policies and initiatives that could encourage more biking and walking, for example, showers at work places could encourage more people to bike to work.
- J. Butzer noted that she liked the bike gap network exercise that the 2016 Plan contained as well as the list of short-term and long-term bike gaps. Butzer recommended that the new Plan have something similar but also include such an exercise for the pedestrian network.

D. Farnsworth mentioned that the Plan is expected to kick off in June of 2021 and be completed around May of 2022. The Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee will likely be the Study Review Committee for this Plan.

6. Shared Electric Scooters – Potential deployment in Fargo & Moorhead

D. Farnsworth informed the Committee that both the cities of Fargo and Moorhead were recently approached by the company Bird seeking to deploy a fleet of dockless electric stand-up scooters in their jurisdictions. The scooters would provide short distance trips which could allow users to rent the scooters for short trips rather than using other means of transportation. Proponents of these scooters feel that the use of scooters could reduce vehicle trips & vehicle traffic and alleviate vehicle parking demand.

Much discussion ensued by members of the Committee with discussion ranging from their experiences with using the scooters in other US cities to concerns about scooter speeds, compliance, enforcement, and parking to discussion about the benefits of scooters.

P. Hollister posed a suggestion - perhaps instead of a full deployment of the scooters in Fargo and Moorhead, a pilot program could be set up where deployment of the scooters could occur in a specific area of the community, such as NDSU. The scooters have GPS on them allowing them to 'shut down' if crossing a specified boundary. Thus, allowing them to remain in a confined area. B. Stevens noted that often NDSU has a lot of construction in the summer and wasn't sure if NDSU officials would be keen on the idea or not. P. Hollister suggested that perhaps NDSU's Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute could gather data on the scooters and trips which could be used in determining trends and best practices.

There were concerns by some members of the Committee how deployment of such scooters may affect the already-established and successful Great Rides bikeshare system.

The status and next steps of Bird's potential deployment was discussed. J. Gorden mentioned that the City of Fargo will likely meet with NDSU, Fargo Police Chief, and attorneys to decide the best course of action. It was suggested by Committee members that Metro COG assist with coordinating between the various jurisdictions involved to discuss and draft scooter regulations and work with the jurisdictions on best practices. D. Farnsworth requested the Metro COG be involved in discussions with both Moorhead and Fargo since Metro COG has researched scooter best practices and regulations for the past two years.

7. Other business

No other business.

Meeting adjourned 4:48 pm.