

118th Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting
March 30th, 2022 – 3:00pm
Hybrid Meeting – In-person & virtual

Members Present

Dan Farnsworth, Chair, Metro COG
Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth
Andrew Wrucke, City of West Fargo Engineering
Bob Walton, NDDOT Fargo District
Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health
Forrest Steinhoff, City of Moorhead Planning
Jane Butzer, MnDOT District 4
Jeremy Gorden, City of Fargo Engineering
Kurt Kopperud, Citizen Representative
Maegin Elshaug, City of Fargo Planning
Matthew Jacobson, Clay County Planning
Grace Puppe, Cass County
Patrick Hollister, PartnerSHIP 4 Health
Tyler Kirchner, Fargo Park District
Christine Holland, River Keepers

Others Present:

Cindy Gray, Metro COG
Luke Champa, Metro COG
Michael Bendel – Paulson, Public

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Approve minutes from December 1st, 2021 meeting

A motion to approve the December 1st minutes was made by P. Mastera and seconded by M. Elshaug. The minutes were passed unanimously with no edits.

3. Public input opportunity

One member of the public was present however no public comments were made during this opportunity.

4. Project/study updates

Red River Greenway Study

L. Champa of Metro COG provided a summary and update on the status of the Red River Greenway Study. He displayed a map showing the study area. The study area includes the Red River corridor on the Fargo side of the river from Riverwood Park (north Fargo) to 124th Ave S (south Fargo) and includes drains 27 and 53. Stakeholder meetings were held a few months ago to gather ideas of desired amenities and needs along the corridor. The study is currently 25% complete and public input is going to get kicked off shortly.

FM Metro Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

D. Farnsworth provided the Committee with a status update on the FM Metro Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Update. The Plan is about 70% complete with a recommendations map being created which was vetted through staff from the local jurisdictions. This recommendations map will be used as part of the second public involvement opportunity where the public will weigh-in on which recommended bicycle/pedestrian corridors are most important.

The second public involvement opportunity is planned to be kicked-off in early April with two virtual public open houses tentatively scheduled for April 12th. The next Study Review Committee meeting will likely occur in May with a draft Plan planned for June and project completion anticipated for July of 2022.

Heartland Trail

D. Farnsworth provided an update on the status of the Heartland Trail within Clay County. He noted that a bonding bill is in the works with the MN Legislature but noted that of the \$2.2 Million requested, only \$500,000 is in the latest version of the bill. This bill includes all aspects of the Heartland Trail including funding for construction in Becker County as well as trail planning and pre-design in Hubbard County and Clay County.

There has also been some recent discussion of trail routing between Glyndon and Dilworth. D. Farnsworth noted that two routes are being considered – the original route traveling north of Glyndon and Dilworth and a more direct route along US Hwy 10.

P. Mastera pointed out that he's been working with Rocky Schneider and the FM Chamber to try and get some local advocacy for the trail, especially as it relates to funding and legislative activity. It was suggested that perhaps it might be better to work on a more local level rather than with other Heartland Trail portions due to our local lack of success in getting funding for the trail. It was also suggested that it would make a lot of sense to begin the Clay Co portion of the trail in Moorhead/Dilworth and work eastward.

C. Gray pointed out that of the projects listed for future Metro COG UPWP projects is a study of the Heartland Trail between Hawley and Moorhead. A tentative cost estimate for a study like this would be \$200,000 which would require a 20% local match (\$40,000).

5. US Bike Route 20 & Resolution of Support

The Committee was presented with information regarding US Bicycle Route 20 – a proposed bicycle route which would connect St. Cloud to the Fargo/Moorhead area with towns, cities, and points of interest along the way. US Bike Route 20 would also tie into two other bicycle networks in Minnesota. The US Bike Routes are bicycling routes that have been federally recognized by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

D. Farnsworth displayed the proposed route to the Committee. F. Steinhoff described how the City of Moorhead worked with MnDOT in determining the route through Moorhead – utilizing existing and planned shared use path and skirting Fargo’s Lindenwood Park, which provides camping.

Metro COG is seeking a resolution of support for the planned US Bike Route 20, noting that both Moorhead and Clay County have recently passed similar resolutions. A resolution of support was provided in the Committee’s agenda packet. A motion to recommend Policy Board approval of the resolution of support was made by P. Hollister and seconded by P. Mastera. The motion was passed unanimously.

6. New Transportation Alternatives funding amounts

With the Fargo-Moorhead area’s urbanized population over 200,000, Metro COG’s status is in the process of transitioning to a Transportation Management Area (TMA). As a TMA Metro COG will be able to select and allocate funding for Transportation Alternatives (TA) projects rather than the state DOTs making this determination. In addition, Metro COG is expected to receive considerably more funding per year than was previously awarded to projects.

Using a spreadsheet Metro COG developed, the Committee discussed how to best fund and select projects on the North Dakota side of the metro. No discussion was had with Minnesota projects as funding amounts and direction from MnDOT has yet to be provided.

It was decided that the projects which already received funding award letters from NDDOT will continue to be awarded funding as planned. These projects include the following:

- Fargo – Bison Village Paths (2023)
- Horace/Cass Co – CR 17 Shared Use Path Phase 3 (2023)
- Horace/Cass Co – Center Ave Multi-Modal Improvements (2023)
- West Fargo – Eaglewood – The Lights Bike Path (2024)

The projects listed above will plan to be funded 80% with the Federal TA funds and the required local match of 20%. As for the remainder of the 2023 funding (currently estimated at \$66,406), this funding will go toward Fargo’s 2nd Street Pedestrian Bridge project. The reason for choosing this project is because this is the only project that is anticipated to be able to use this funding within the limited timeframe - the project is currently going through the time-intensive required Federal NEPA process.

Determination of which projects will be awarded the remainder of the 2024 funds will be determined at a future meeting.

In the meantime, Metro COG will ask the jurisdictions to provide updated cost estimates for the awarded projects listed above in order to have a better idea of remaining 2023 and 2024 funding for other projects. Cost estimates have been rising due to current inflation and cost of construction and materials.

7. 2022 Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Report

D. Farnsworth provided a brief summary of the 2022 Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Report. Using data from Metro COG's five automated bicycle & pedestrian counters, one MnDOT counter, and 16 manual count locations, a report was created to summarize the data gleaned from Metro COG's counting program.

D. Farnsworth went over various sections of the report noting trends by location, time of day, month of year, and year. The report was included in the agenda packet and is available online on Metro COG's website by clicking on Resources, Planning, and then Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning.

8. Effects of potential daylight saving time change to SRTS

With the US Senate recently passing a bill which would make daylight saving time permanent, Metro COG felt it was important to display how this could affect those walking and biking in the morning hours – specifically students.

If the permanent daylight saving time went into effect, the sun would rise one hour later during the months of November, December, January, and February. Correspondingly, elementary students who typically walk (or bike) to school would be doing so in the dark during these months. Currently most local elementary school students only walk school in the dark or twilight during the month of January.

C. Gray noted that the ND Legislature passed a (bill/statement) last year noting that if the Federal Government passed a bill to make daylight saving time permanent, North Dakota would follow suit.

9. Other business

No other business was discussed.