

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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National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder Training Program

The second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2) was created to find strategic solutions to three national transportation challenges: improving highway safety, reducing congestion, and improving methods for renewing roads and bridges. Research has focused on four areas--safety renewal, reliability, and capacity--and includes hundreds of research projects, products, and reports.

The SHRP 2 National TIM Responder Training Program was developed by responders for responders. This program is designed to promote consistent training of all responders to traffic incidents to achieve three objectives of the TIM National Unified Goal (NUG):

- Responder safety;
- Safe, quick clearance; and
- Prompt, reliable, interoperable communications.

A responder training program will be on Tuesday, October 24 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Clay County Joint Public Works Facility (2951 41 1/2 Street S, Moorhead). Train-the-Trainer (TtT) courses are intended to provide participants (i.e. trainers) the knowledge and materials necessary for them to conduct TIM training for responders in their area or state. The TtT is a one-day course that covers eight hours of material, including classroom training and hands-on activities.

The target audience for this course is all TIM disciplines including: communications, emergency management, emergency medical services (EMS), fire/rescue, law enforcement, towing and recovery, and transportation/public works.

To RSVP, please contact Savanna Leach at leach@fmmetrocog.org or call 701.232.3242 ext. 0.

For questions regarding the details of this training or participation requirements, please contact Rusty James, Certified TIM Trainer, at 816.206.8545.



Five-vehicle crash on I-94 on August 24

Forum Communications



PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!

Look for this symbol

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Self-Driving Vehicles and Travel Demand Modeling

Many people consider autonomous vehicles to be a significant part of the future of transportation. As technology continues to develop, state and municipal governments will be tasked with addressing the potential impacts of these vehicles on the road.



One of Uber's autonomous Ford Fusion cars in Pittsburgh
Getty Images

However, transportation planning processes have been slow to catch up with this technology. Most Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Departments of Transportation (DOTs) still proceed with planning and forecasting paradigms that don't have proper placeholders to account for this emerging change in travel technology. Many agencies are still planning for twenty-thirty-fourty years in the future based on the same transportation planning principles used in the past. At the same time, implications of wide spread autonomous vehicles on both passenger and freight sides are most likely to be enormous in terms of travel demand, travel behavior, travel trends and vehicle-miles traveled, household expenditures, and residential and work location choices.

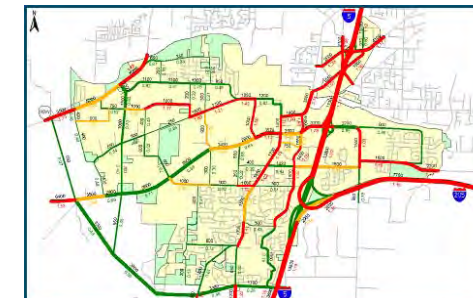


Daimler AG debuts one of its autonomous trucks on the A14 Autobahn in Germany
Image by Daimler AG

These changes have been debated at numerous forums, mostly outside of the transportation modeling and forecasting

domain. It is anticipated that the impact of these technologies will extend from changed land use, location and socio-economic behavior, vehicle ownership trends, vehicle fleet composition, trip generation and time of day patterns, induced travel / new travel patterns for non-drivers (young, elderly, disabled, etc.), mode choice, value of time, and route choice. It is imperative to align planning and forecasting tools with the autonomous vehicle technology such that relevant scenarios can be effectively modeled and that necessary information can be provided for planning decisions.

Steps have begun to adjust transportation planning efforts by developing a new travel forecasting paradigm that builds on the latest achievements in demand modeling, in particular the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP 2) efforts, and taking it to the next level by effectively and explicitly accounting for the new passenger transportation technologies involving autonomous vehicles.



Travel demand model showing roadway level of service (LOS)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Transportation planning models are a necessary part of planning decisions and will continue to play an important role in the observable future. In order to maintain relevance of these models and based on the models transportation forecasts, the models need to reflect changes in transportation policies, technologies, and travel behavior in a timely manner. This will be important as Metro COG moves forward with its 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan, where its own travel demand model will strive to best anticipate future trip patterns, including the role of autonomous passenger and freight vehicles, for strategic transportation planning decisions.

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Fargo-Moorhead Regional Freight Plan

On September 21, Metro COG approved the Fargo-Moorhead Regional Freight Plan. Metro COG began this plan back in August 2016 to better understand freight issues and to help inform regional leaders about transportation service and infrastructure needs for companies in the regional economy. While Metro COG's primary planning interests lie in the public elements of the region, the plan examines freight infrastructure and freight service demands across all modes in the regional transportation network.

The Regional Freight Plan complements state freight plans in North Dakota and Minnesota, but reflects the needs and objectives of the region. The plan examines factors affecting freight movement to, from, and within the region to inform Metro COG's other short- and long-range transportation planning efforts. These factors include information from first and last mile truck movements, to long-haul freight entering and exiting the region. Understanding regional supply chain elements is important in determining future investment needs to keep local infrastructure efficient and effective in supporting freight movement.

The Fargo-Moorhead Regional Freight Plan is intended to help guide freight investments in the region that support the safety, social equity, economic productivity, sustainability and livable community goals established under Metro COG Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The freight plan also presents performance metrics to assist Metro COG in monitoring programs, project prioritization/selection, and support federal guidance for competitive funding programs.

To view or download a copy of this plan, please visit Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

Regional Railroad Crossing Safety Study

One of the primary methods for increasing public safety as it relates to the freight railroad network is by reducing at-grade crossing hazards. With this in mind, the Railroad Crossing Safety Study applies a systematic approach to evaluating or screening each of the 215 rail crossings within Metro COG's planning area to help provide a prioritized listing of improvements at specific locations and other system-wide recommendations.

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate each of the crossings for predicted accidents based on quantifiable data, review those crossings in the context of local traffic and pedestrian uses, provide a rational basis for ranking of the crossings, and arrive at a prioritized listing of those that merit improvements. This plan identifies ten crossings and provides recommendations that would improve the safety at locations in Fargo, Moorhead, Sabin, Glyndon, and Hawley. A secondary purpose of this study is to provide a regional context for rail safety by addressing safety trends and issues that may assist Metro COG in developing and implementing a broader, area-wide, rail safety plan.

This plan is scheduled to be reviewed by Metro COG's Policy Board in October. To view the draft plan, please visit Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

17th Avenue South Corridor Study

Fargo's 17th Avenue is a heavily used corridor that stretches the entire length of the city and into West Fargo. While primarily residential, the corridor supports some of the most intense retail and commercial development in the region, including West Acres. It serves three area schools (Lewis and Clark Elementary, South High School, and Cheney Middle School) and several of the largest parks in the metro area including Elmwood Park, Rabanus Park, and Lindenwood Park which connects to Gooseberry Park in Moorhead. The purpose of this study is to understand the current and long-term vision of 17th Avenue and analyze impacts of potential improvements which address declining level of service (LOS) operations and the identified need for a cross-town bicycle route. The study area is broken into two segments:

- The west segment from the western City of Fargo limits to 32nd Street includes residential, commercial, and retail land uses. This segment is primarily three- and four-lane sections. The goal of this segment is to improve traffic flow while balancing the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.
- The east segment from 32nd Street to 5th Street includes mainly residential land uses and is primarily a two-lane section. The goal of this segment is to improve bicycle mobility and safety while balancing the needs for other modes of travel.



Traffic queues on 17th Avenue at the I-29 underpass Photo by KLI

For questions on this study, please contact Dan Farnsworth at farnsworth@fmmetrocog.org.



Cover of the Regional Freight Plan Graphic by Quitica



Cass County Comprehensive & Transportation Plan

Cass County and Metro COG are in the process of developing a comprehensive and transportation plan to foster a more vibrant and resilient county. Comprehensive planning is used to help determine community goals and aspirations in terms of community development. A comprehensive plan is an official document adopted by elected officials which serves as a policy guide, vision, and roadmap for the future.

The last comprehensive plan for Cass County was adopted in 2005 and focused on water resource issues, rural development, and infrastructure. In the time since, the county has changed markedly with the addition of nearly 40,000 new residents accompanied by sustained commercial and economic growth. An updated comprehensive and transportation plan will provide innovative guidance for public policy and decision-making on a wide range of topics including: land use and development, transportation, floodplain management, economic development, emergency management, energy, intergovernmental cooperation, and capital improvements.

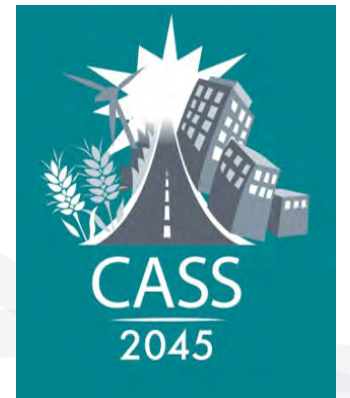
One of the topics that has received considerable attention in the planning process is the need for affordable housing to support current economic development efforts. Transportation will also be a major topic as the county takes a closer look at future roadway needs and the resources they will entail. The plan is also beginning to take a closer look at emerging issues such as the relationship between food systems and public health as well as other important quality of life issues.

A number of upcoming public involvement meetings will be held throughout the county including:

- October 3 at 7:00 pm - Historic Buffalo High School (303 Pearl Street N, Buffalo)
- October 4 at 3:00 pm - Cass County Highway Department (1201 Main Avenue W, West Fargo)
- October 4 at 7:00 pm - Veterans Memorial Hall (702 1st Street N, Casselton)

A survey can also be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Cass2045>. Residents may also call 701.271.5018 to request a mail-in questionnaire.

For additional information and updates on this plan, please visit Cass County's website at www.casscountynd.gov.



Graphic by KLI



What are your thoughts on 13th Avenue? Image by HDR



13th Avenue South Corridor Study

What ideas pop into your head when you drive, walk, or bike along 13th Avenue in West Fargo?

The City of West Fargo along with Metro COG are gathering public input to create a long-range vision for 13th Avenue. This study will include recommendations on what the roadway should look like from the Fargo/West Fargo city limits to the Red River Valley Fairgrounds.

A quick, two-minute survey can be found at bit.ly/13AveWFSurvey.

BIKE FM to Become Chapter of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Metro COG has long sought the creation of a local organization that could implement various bicycle education events and safety campaigns throughout the community. Such an organization has been recommended in both the 2011 and more recent 2016 Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

In early 2017, PartnerSHIP4Health laid the groundwork for the creation of BIKE FM, an organization for information, knowledge, and education in the Fargo-Moorhead area. One of the ways this organization has promoted its efforts is by using Metro COG's existing website www.bikefm.org as a platform for community efforts.

BIKE FM is now poised to become a chapter of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization which strives to make Minnesota a more bicycle-friendly state. BikeMN advocates for bicycle friendly laws, policies, projects, and programs; and uses awareness campaigns geared towards motorists based on national best practices. BikeMN also works directly with businesses and communities to be more bicycle friendly through sponsored events and promotions.

Becoming a chapter with the alliance will allow a number of benefits including potential funding opportunities for BIKE FM through the alliance's donation network, as well as program support and state-wide publicity of efforts happening in the community.



Austin Hauf, Green Corps alumni with PartnerSHIP4Health, was instrumental in the creation of BIKE FM Photo by Great Northern Bicycle