



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 Savanna Leach!

Hello! My name is Savanna Leach, and I recently joined the Metro COG family as the newest Executive Secretary. I am Minnesota-born, North Dakota raised, and recently purchased a home in Moorhead (to get back to my roots). I studied Graphic Design and Art History at Minnesota State University Moorhead. I have an extensive background in Administration, Information Technology, and Workplace Safety.

I keep pretty busy, as I also work part time at a local coffee shop, and run bar trivia on Friday nights. I am a volunteer with 4 Luv of Dog rescue, having 10 foster dogs come through my house so far, and I have two dogs of my own as well. I enjoy a lot of “nerdy” things: all things sci-fi, tabletop gaming, costume building, podcasting, veganism, and slowly restoring my classic Glastron.

I am excited to join the Metro COG team, and hope to help the community grow and thrive.

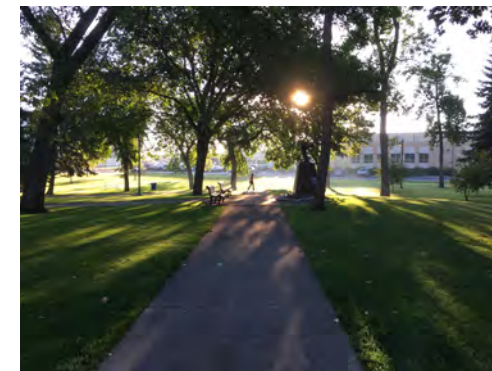


Metro COG is committed to ensuring all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability/handicap, sexual orientation, or income status have access to Metro COG’s programs and services. Meeting facilities will be accessible to mobility impaired individuals. Metro COG will make 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 able to participate in the meeting.



2016 FM Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Metro COG is wrapping up efforts on the 2016 Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Started in early 2016 and completed every five years, this plan will be used to guide Metro COG and local jurisdictions in the planning and prioritization of future bicycle and pedestrian needs.



The Fargo-Moorhead area’s bicycle and pedestrian network consists of a variety of facilities intended to provide connectivity throughout the area. As the community grows, the networks follows suit. The area has added a number of facilities in recent years, including 12 miles of bike lanes, six miles of shared lane markings, and 50 miles of shared use paths since 2010.



Issues involving the current bicycle and pedestrian network were identified through an early public involvement process as well as regular guidance from a Study Review Committee and the Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (MBPC). In late April, various public open houses were held to obtain valued input. Public open houses were held at the Fargo Family Wellness Center, Downtown Fargo Public Library, MSUM Comstock Memorial Union, and NDSU Me-

morial Union. As part of each event, attendees participated in an exercise where they looked at current gaps in the bicycle network and asked to note which gaps they felt were of high importance and medium importance for completion. In addition to the public open houses, an online survey was available. In total, 342 surveys were completed (24 paper surveys and 318 online surveys).



The plan lists a number of recommendations based on issues identified throughout the planning process and the goals and objectives developed as part of the plan. These recommendations include: enhanced bicycle and motorist education and safety campaigns, bicycle network improvements for better connectivity and increased access within and outside the metropolitan area, improved maintenance on existing facilities, and encouraging urban design standards that encourage bicycle and pedestrian use.



A final public comment opportunity will be held in the coming weeks prior to plan adoption. Please visit Metro COG’s website, facebook page, or contact Dan Farnsworth at farnsworth@fmmetrocog.org for further information.



PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!

Look for this symbol

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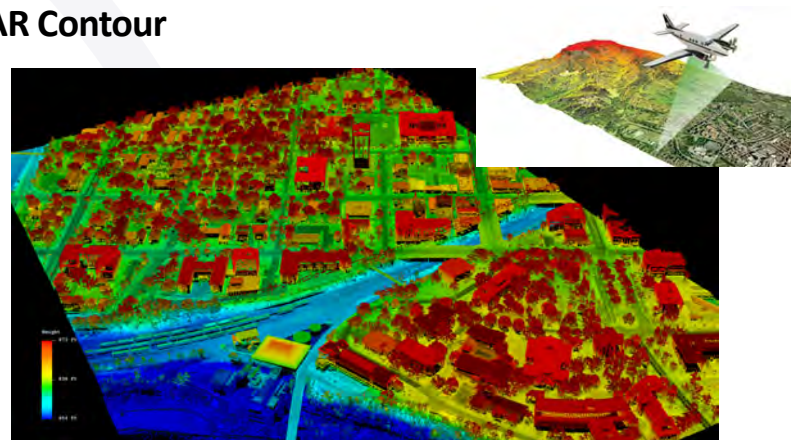


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2017 Ortho Aerial Photography, LiDAR Contour Mapping, and Planimetrics Update

Metro COG, in conjunction with local jurisdictions and the FM Diversion Authority, has scheduled an aerial photography/LiDAR data collection update. This joint contract provides updated aerial ortho imagery and elevation/contour mapping data as well as updated information for building footprints, road paving edges, and impervious surfaces in the region. Local jurisdictions and the FM Diversion Authority contribute funding based on their specific data needs.

Flights to capture aerial imagery and LiDAR data will commence this spring as soon as snow cover is gone and the Red River is below flood action stage (less than 17 feet).



LiDAR, which stand for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote-sensing surveying method that uses laser light to measure variable distances to the Earth.



Regional Freight Plan

Metro COG, in consultation with Quètica, LLC, is developing a regional freight plan for the FM metropolitan area. When complete, this plan will guide freight investments in a manner that supports safety, economic productivity, social equity, and sustainable and livable communities. The goals, objectives, and performance measures generated by this plan will provide the basis of freight project selection, funding, and monitoring freight movement as it relates to the FM metropolitan area. It is anticipated that this project will be complete by September 2017.

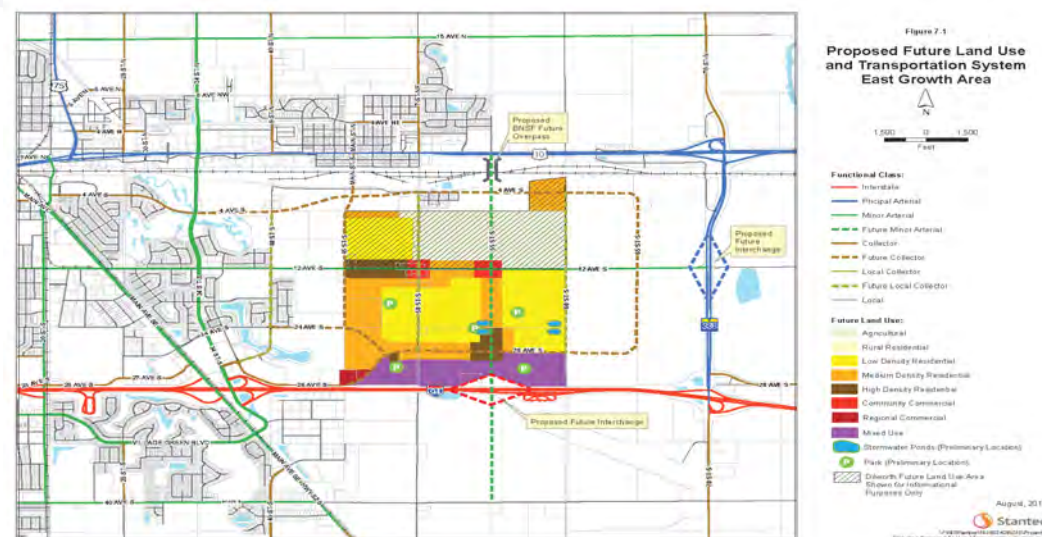
On Friday, January 29 from 8:30 am to 12:00pm, a Regional Freight Business Forum will be held in the Fargo Commission Chambers. This forum will be an opportunity for the consultant team to listen to feedback on key freight issues, confirm/clarify preliminary information gathered by the team, begin to prioritize issues and potential policies, and allow participants and opportunity to network. All members of the public are welcome to attend.

For questions on this project or the Regional Freight Business Forum, please contact Adam Altenburg at altenburg@fmmetrocog.org.

2016 Moorhead Growth Area Plan

In early 2016, the City of Moorhead initiated the development of three Growth Area Plans (GAPs) for areas in east, southwest, and southwest Moorhead. Led by Stantec and representatives from Moorhead Planning, the GAPs are intended to designate land uses within these areas which ensure that future development is connected to the larger community. Key objectives associated with Moorhead's GAPs include addressing needs identified in recent infrastructure studies, indicating land uses which complement the city's Comprehensive Plan, providing guidance for capital improvement investments, and informing future development and zoning decisions. Ultimately, these plans are intended to provide an implementable, flexible roadmap to ensure future development is integrated into the larger community.

For more information on the Moorhead Growth Area Plan, please visit the City of Moorhead's website at www.cityofmoorhead.com.



Sheyenne Street Reconstruction Project

Metro COG recently completed the Sheyenne Street Corridor Study which evaluated and recommended roadway improvements to the Sheyenne Street corridor. Now the City of West Fargo, in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, is working on the environmental and design stages of the project.

The area currently being proposed for improvements on Sheyenne Street span from 13th Avenue to 40th Avenue. These improvements also include the Sheyenne St/I-94 interchange. Proposed improvements include widening Sheyenne Street to a five-lane roadway (two through lanes + center left turn lane) between 13th Avenue and 19th Avenue, widening to a six-lane roadway from 19th Avenue to 32nd Avenue, and widening to a four-lane roadway from 32nd Avenue to 40th Avenue. A complete reconfiguration of the Sheyenne Street/I-94 interchange will improve safety and reduce congestion in and around the area.

Due to the length of and complexity of the project, it has been broken up into three segments. The segments and corresponding timelines include:

- Segment 1: 13th Avenue to 19th Avenue, 2020 construction season
- Segment 2: 19th Avenue to 32nd Avenue & Sheyenne St/I-94 Interchange, 2018 construction season
- Segment 3: 32nd Avenue to 40th Avenue & Sheyenne St/I-94 Interchange, 2019 construction season

Any questions may be forwarded to Travis Wieber at KLJ at 701.271.4863.



Safe Routes to School Plan Updates - Moorhead and West Fargo

Metro COG is currently working on Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) plan updates for the City of Moorhead and the City of West Fargo. These studies aim to make walking and bicycling safer and more accessible for elementary and middle school children as well as increase the number of children who choose to walk and bicycle to school. The studies also examine issues such as traffic congestion near schools and other potential barriers and safety concerns. A total of seven schools in Moorhead and 14 schools in West Fargo are involved in each of the studies.

Safe Routes to School is a national program established in 2005 intended to create safe, accessible, and fun opportunities for children to walk or bicycle to and from school. With the assistance of school officials, parents, community leaders, and local, state, and federal governments; the program aims to improve health, safety, and transportation. It examines why fewer children are walking and bicycling to school, what caused this shift from a generation ago, and the unintended consequences that may result. Safe Routes to School programs have a growing record of success as communities seek to increase the number of children walking and bicycling safely to school.



A number of data collection and outreach efforts have been conducted in conjunction with both studies. In both May and October, Metro COG surveyed conditions around schools in Moorhead and West Fargo examining pathways, crosswalk conditions, and potential congestion issues. Teachers at each of the schools have also been involved in the studies by assisting with arrival and departure tally surveys, in which they asked students how they arrived at school and how they planned to leave during a several day time span. Online surveys were also developed for parents and caregivers to obtain more information about potential issues they see in their children arriving at and leaving from school. The surveys were designed to get a better sense of any activities or changes that could make it easier for children to walk or bicycle to school. A total of 145 respondents from Moorhead schools and 778 respondents from West Fargo schools provided input on the surveys.

Any comments or questions on either of these projects may be directed to Adam Altenburg at altenburg@fmmetrocog.org.