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New Surface Transportation Laws Takes Effect

On July 6, 2012, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) was signed into law. MAP-21 replaces the long expired SAFETEA-LU which had been under continuing resolution since the end of Fiscal Year 2009. MAP -21 is the first new surface transportation authorization since 2005, however will only provide for two years of Federal funding guarantees. MAP-21 authorizes surface transportation programs through 9/30/2014, at about the same funding levels of FY 2012.

MAP-21 serves to consolidate several existing Federal aid transportation programs in to a smaller number of broader core programs. MAP-21 eliminates many smaller Federal aid programs, and eliminates altogether discretionary program funding. MAP-21 will set the stage for a transition to a performance based transportation planning and programming environment. MAP -21 aims to transform the Federal highway program and provide a means to a more efficient investment of Federal transportation funds by focusing on national transportation goals and increasing the transparency of Federal aid highway investments.

MAP-21 puts more emphasis on critical national infrastructure, and creates a new National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) which will include all of the former National Highway System (NHS) and will include several principal arterial roadways not formerly on the NHS (E.g. Trunk Highway 75, portions of the 13th Avenue South, 45th Street, etc.). While designation of the new NHPP network was initially completed by FHWA prior to October 1, 2012 to meet Federal requirements,

additional coordination will be required between Mn/DOT, NDDOT, and Metro COG before the NHPP is finalized.


MAP-21 will also have a dramatic impact on funding for public transit, specifically the services provided by the Metropolitan Area Transit (MATBUS). FTA funding programs are streamlined, however to a lesser degree than are FHWA funding. As with FHWA programs, FTA programs will now be implemented under a more performance based approach, with a focus on transit asset management and ensuring a state of good repair.

Now that the legislative process has concluded FHWA and FTA will initiate the rule making process regarding MAP-21. Once FHWA/FTA issue their final rule on MAP-21 Metro COG will initiate an aggressive program to come into compliance with new provisions of the law. The rule making process will likely take twelve (12) to fifteen (15) months, on the short end. However, new guidance and clarification on the MAP-21 is being released frequently from both FHWA and FTA.

Over the next several months Metro COG will work cooperatively with both the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) regarding implementation of MAP-21. Metro COG will use its 2013-2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the pending update of our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to develop and implement key strategies to ensure compliance with MAP-21.

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Moorhead River Corridor Study

As a result of the floods of 2009, 2010, and 2011, the City of Moorhead initiated a number of interrelated flood mitigation actions. One of the most visible actions is the proactive acquisition of flood-prone properties adjacent to the river. Through that effort, a large portion of private property along the Red River has been transferred to public ownership.

A number of citizens have inquired about potential future uses for these areas adjacent to the river. The City of Moorhead has requested that the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG) assist in a planning study to develop a long term strategy for these properties.

Metro COG, along with the City of Moorhead, has developed a specific scope of work for the River Corridor Study. Initiation of the study is timely in that the City recently issued a final round of acquisition offers. The outcome of those acquisitions is pertinent to the scope of potential uses and connectivity of uses. At a minimum, the plan will encompass the following elements:

Maintenance: Outline the strategy to maintain existing and future lands held by the City; including an understanding of the maintenance needs for the addition of any new facilities.

Trees & Landscaping: Outline the strategy and potential for tree planting and landscaping improvements. The flood mitigation improvements constructed on many of the acquired lots required the removal of trees. Replacement of lost trees, and opportunities for landscaping enhancements, will be considered within the limitations of vegetation free zones and vegetation management zones required to ensure the structural integrity of the flood mitigation improvements.

Trails & Shared Use Paths: Outline the strategy for the potential addition of new trails and shared use paths on properties recently acquired. The goal is to expand upon the existing trail system which runs along the Red River in the City Moorhead, with an attempt to make connections to existing or future facilities planned by the City of Fargo. This analysis would likely include a discussion regarding future bicycle and pedestrian connections spanning the Red River.

Recreational Facilities: The plan will explore, in consultation with the public, the potential to add recreational amenities along the Red River, keeping in mind that any new facilities need to be low maintenance and flood tolerant.

Funding and Programming: The plan will be developed with an eye on fiscal reasonableness. A detailed implementation plan will be developed that would reflect realistically available local, State, and Federal resources.

Public Involvement: The cornerstone of the plan development process will be a public involvement effort. A series of neighborhood

meetings and general purpose public input meetings are envisioned to gather early input from residents. Meetings will also be held as alternatives and concepts are developed. Residents will be actively involved in the development of the plan. Representatives from each of the City's flood zones will form a special Citizen's Advisory Committee to provide feedback on proposed facilities along the river. Public involvement will begin later in 2012.

Food Systems



The Metro COG Policy Board has approved a scope of work to begin researching and writing a Food Systems Study for the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative (CCFSI). In late 2010 the CCFSI was created in response to the growing interest in assuring access to healthy food for all residents and providing opportunities to grow and consume locally grown food. CCFSI aims to improve the production, sales, distribution, and consumption of healthy and locally grown foods within the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. Strengthening the local food system will positively impact the health, food security, economy, and environment of the two-state community. The initiative sponsored a community engagement event in September 2011 and currently has 80 members involved in regular task force meetings.

Strengthening local food systems is a regional issue that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. Food producers and distributors operate within and throughout the entire region; the coordination of an emphasis on local foods needs to be region-wide as well. Coordinated planning is necessary to ensure successful implementation of the whole food system from farmer to table to waste disposal. Metro COG's position as a regional authority in matters crossing jurisdictional boundaries puts it in a unique position to address these issues with the CCFSI.

The Food Systems Study will consist of an existing conditions report and an analysis of recommended actions in the areas of Community Based Agriculture, Land Use, Regulation &

Public Policy Analysis, Community & Demographic Profile, Economic Development, Food Security, and Food Waste and Recycling. Public meetings will be held later this fall to gather input regarding existing conditions and eventual output.

Household Origin-Destination Study

In November of 2010 Metro COG initiated a household origin/destination (or travel behavioral) study to look specifically at travel patterns in Fargo-Moorhead. The study surveyed 875 households (equating to 1,860 travel diaries) with oversampling based on certain demographic variables such as zero vehicles, large households and minority populations to ensure a statistically valid sample.

Over the years, Metro COG's travel forecast model has performed reasonably well in replicating ground truths; however, it was determined through a peer review in 2003 that additional data would further enhance the model's performance relative to local travel characteristics. Thereby, the results from this study will be a critical input and upgrade within Metro COG's regional traffic forecast model which is currently structured to utilize average national level data to calibrate trip generation, trip length distribution and other calibration components.

Study results include a number of interesting findings relative to travel patterns and characteristics within the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. Outlined below are a few highlights:

Trip Generation: Trip generation rates within the 2005 base model (ie. 2015 and 2035 forecasts) are based on national data pursuant to National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 365 and ITE Trip Generation Manual, 5th Edition. The number of trips produced in the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Planning Area is based on the number of dwelling units, categorized by single family (3 units or less) or multi-family (4 or more units). Findings from the study suggest vehicle trip rates per day were significantly less for both single-family and multi-family units as compared to figures utilized in the 2005 base model. See corresponding figure for comparisons.

Dwelling Unit Category	2005	(2011) HH OD Study
Single Family	9.55	5.57
Multi-Family	6.47	3.33

Trip Length Distribution: The 2005 base model utilizes data from the 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) to calibrate trip lengths for modeled vehicle trips. Census defined trip lengths ranged from 8.1 minutes to 14.1 minutes, dependent upon trip purpose. Data obtained through this study suggests trip lengths that are considerably longer; ranging from 11.8 minutes to 18.1 minutes, again dependent upon trip purpose.

What does this mean? From the data analyzed as part of this study, households are making fewer trips (as compared to national data utilized in the 2005 base model); however, the amount of time a vehicle spends on the roadway network has significantly increased.

A PDF copy of the Household Origin-Destination Mobility Study is available via Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org. If you have any questions, comments or would like additional information on this study contact Joe Nigg, Principal Planner at 701.232.3242x28 or by email at nigg@fmmetrocog.org.

12th Ave N (45th Street - CR 19)

Cooperative Project Concept Report (PCR) & Design Plans

In 2011, the City of West Fargo submitted a federal grant application for reconstruction of the 12th Avenue NE corridor from 45th Street to County Road 19 (CR 19). The project was selected by NDDOT to receive Federal Surface Transportation Urban Roads (STP/U) grant funds in 2015. The project was awarded to receive 80% STP/U Federal Funds of \$9,163,250.

The 12th Avenue NE corridor from 45th Street to CR 19 is currently a 2-lane rural roadway. The corridor has a high percentage of trucks as compared to passenger vehicles. It currently serves as a farm to market roadway and serves agricultural processors, industrial, heavy commercial and residential uses. It is classified as a minor arterial roadway and provides transportation to three jurisdictions (West Fargo, Fargo, and Cass County).

Metro COG and its project partners (West Fargo, Fargo and Cass County) have recently worked together to select a consultant to complete the 12th Avenue North Cooperative PCR and Design Plans project. The project will be completed in three phases:

- Phase I - Planning elements of the Project Concept Report (\$100,000 - 80% Federally Funded);
- Phase II - Project Concept Report; and
- Phase III - Engineering Design Plans;

Metro COG is in the process of contracting with the consultant team on Phase I - the Planning Elements of the PCR. The purpose of the cooperative PCR is to utilize the planning elements and move them directly into the environmental document (the PCR) instead of completing them twice - once under the corridor study and second as part of the environmental document. This streamlining between planning and environmental documentation will save both time, money, and public frustration during the development of a project that has already been programmed for funding.

The project will begin in late October 2012 with data collection and the first round of public input meetings should be advertised in early 2013.

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Website Updates



Metro COG Updates Website:

Metro COG is completing the installation of a new Content Management System and Mobile Device Website. Although the look of fmmetrokog.org may be similar the new site has the capacity to hold more documents and provide increased functionality for users.

Another addition to this website update is Metro COG will soon have their mobile application up and running. Soon, Metro COG will be accessible at the simple touch of button. The release date has not yet been confirmed but we anticipate within the next month.

Final Public Input Being Solicited for University Drive Corridor Study

Final Public Input Being Solicited for University Drive Corridor Study
Metro COG and the City of Fargo are holding one final public input meeting with the neighbors and residents along the University Drive corridor between 13th Avenue and the 25th Avenue South. As of August 2012 the project team has been unable to satisfactorily achieve consensus on a final recommended project alternative for the area between 13th Avenue and 18th Avenue South. A primary issue identified is the right-of-way encroachment occurring on the 1500 block of South University Drive, and uncertainties regarding right of way on the 1600 block of South University Drive. Further, there is substantial concern among businesses and property owners about the addition of a continuous 3rd lane southbound south of 13th Avenue, an alternative which looks to address traffic conditions along the corridor.

The final draft Corridor Study and informational materials are available for review and comment by going to Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrokog.org. Written comments on the final draft University Drive Corridor Study will be accepted until noon November 2, 2012. Public comments and questions should be directed to Jeremy Gorden via e-mail feng@cityoffargo.com, phone 241-1545, or U.S. mail at Engineering Dept., 200 3rd Street N, 58102. Pending public comment, the Fargo City Commission is anticipated to act on the recommendations of the University Drive Corridor Study so as to implement identified improvements within the study area.