

124th Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting
March 20th, 2024 – 3:00pm
Hybrid Meeting – Virtual / In-person (Metro COG Conference Room)

Members Present

Dan Farnsworth, Chair, Metro COG
Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth
Aaron Murra, NDDOT - Fargo District
Andrew Wrucke, City of West Fargo Engineering
Joe Anderson, City of Fargo Police
Patrick Hollister, PartnerSHIP 4 Health
Forrest Steinhoff, City of Moorhead Planning
Jeremy Gorden, City of Fargo Engineering
Kurt Kopperud, Citizen Representative
Luke Morman, City of Fargo Planning
Leslie McGillivray-Rivas, City of West Fargo Planning
Cole Hanson, Cass County Planning
Christine Holland, River Keepers
Luke Grittner, MATBUS

Others Present:

Ben Griffith, Metro COG
Paul Bervik, Metro COG
Terry Steen, Citizen/Flatlands Cycling Club
Jason Pike, online attendee
Online attendee [name unknown]

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 3:03 pm. Both virtual and in-person attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approve minutes from December 13th, 2023 meeting

A motion to approve the December 13th minutes was made by L. McGillivray-Rivas and seconded by F. Steinhoff. The minutes were passed unanimously with no edits.

3. Public input opportunity

One member from the public was present at the meeting but and two were present online, however no public comments were made.

4. Project updates

Clay County Heartland Trail Study

D. Farnsworth provided an update on the Clay County Heartland Trail Study. Farnsworth noted that Metro COG has hired a consulting team to conduct this study which was kicked-off in February. The first study review committee meeting was held on March 19th, which included a field visit of the study corridor. This study is the largest effort to date for the Clay Co portion of the Heartland Trail. This study will result in strong public feedback and engagement, will determine an alignment, and will provide guidance on next steps as well as funding strategies. This study is expected to be completed in mid-2025.

Moorhead Safe Routes to School Study

D. Farnsworth provided a brief update the Moorhead Safe Routes to School Study which Metro COG is conducting in-house. This study was recently kicked-off with an anticipated completion at the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. This study includes all public schools in Moorhead (minus the high school) and two private schools. However, the private schools are involved in a lesser degree. In April Metro COG plans to do field visits at each school, including site observations of student arrival and dismissal.

Downtown Fargo Red River Trail corridor discussions

Metro COG recently coordinated a meeting with City of Fargo, Fargo PD, River Keepers, Downtown Community Partnership, and Fargo Parks to discuss how the downtown Red River trail corridor could be improved, cleaned-up, and made more inviting for users. Recently, a Fargo City Commissioner asked Metro COG what they are doing to improve this deteriorating area of the river corridor. Metro COG is discussing ways to address graffiti, garbage, lack of lighting, trail conditions (including water on trail), and more. D. Farnsworth noted that these discussions don't involve recent encampments, the City of Fargo has a separate group discussing those matters.

J. Gorden noted that Fargo plans to work with Fargo Parks in applying for ND Rec Trails Program grant funding for reconstruction (possible realignment) of the Red River trail from 1st Ave N or NP Ave to Main Ave or Dike East. These applications will be due in April 2024.

Bicycle Friendly Community Application

D. Farnsworth noted that Metro COG has began the application for Bicycle Friendly Communities for the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area. Metro COG first applied in 2014 on behalf of the FM area, which received Bronze status. Metro COG renewed this application in 2018 and received Bronze status again. Metro COG is once again applying as each status is valid for four years. Farnsworth noted that the FM Area's status has technically lapsed since it's been six years since the 2018 award. Farnsworth noted that the application has become more tedious with the application increasing from 50 pages to 80 pages.

As time permits, the Committee will go over key questions from the application toward the end of this meeting.

5. 2024 Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Report

P. Bervik presented the draft 2024 Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Report to the Committee. He first discussed the data gathered from the seven automated bike/ped counts in the FM Area. This included time of day comparison, time of year comparison, location comparison, and temperature/count comparisons. Bervik then showed overall data from the sixteen manual count locations. It was noted that this finalized report will be available online on Metro COG's website once shown to the TTC and Policy Board in April.

6. Future automated bike/ped counter locations

P. Bervik then discussed Metro COG's plans to expand automated bicycle/pedestrian counting the FM Area. At the August 2023 Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee meeting, Metro COG proposed 12 future counter locations and followed-up with a survey to the Committee to prioritize the installation of future trail counter locations. The prioritization from the survey to the Committee in August were the following:

1. West Fargo, Drain 45
2. Fargo, along VA Hospital trail
3. Dilworth, along Heartland Trail
4. Fargo, near Microsoft Office Complex
- 5 tied Fargo, West Acres neighborhood
- 5 tied Fargo, Urban Plains neighborhood
7. Fargo, along 64th Ave near Sports Complex
8. West Fargo, Downtown
9. Horace, along CR 17
10. West Fargo, 32nd Ave near The Lights
11. Moorhead, near Horizon Middle School
12. Moorhead Soccer Complex

As Metro COG looks to purchase future automated bicycle/pedestrian counters, they will be following the prioritization for permanent counter placement. Metro COG hopes to purchase two counters per year.

Metro COG requested a motion by the Committee. A motion to adopt the prioritization for future counter placement was made by P. Hollister and seconded by J. Gorden. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Discuss & revise criteria for TA grant scoring

When scoring the TA grant applications in December it was requested that two criteria be considered/reconsidered prior to the next round of TA application scoring in Nov/Dec of 2024. The first criteria was regarding trail maintenance and rehabilitation. When scoring the US 81/University Shared Use Path reconstruction project, it became evident that there was no criteria concerning infrastructure reconstruction, maintenance, or rehab. For this meeting Metro COG developed a new criteria for maintenance/rehab for the Committee to

consider. This criteria met the categories of Metro COG's currently-adopted MTP. This newly-developed criteria read:

Does the project maintain/rehabilitate an existing facility (Evaluation Instructions: Full points are intended for projects with the majority of the work entailing rehab/maintenance. For projects with rehab/maintenance as a smaller component of the over project, partial points ca be considered).

P. Mastera felt as though the evaluation instructions were too vague and should be more defined. He also wondered if this new criteria might be effectively give bonus points beyond other projects.

After some discussion it was suggested that it would be best to dive into this new criteria deeper, however doing it as part of a long Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee meeting might not be appropriate. Therefore, P. Mastera suggested that the TA scoring criteria subcommittee, which was used a few years ago, come together and proposed the best way to score maintenance/rehab projects, and also the EJ criteria which was to be discussed at this meeting. This subcommittee which met several years ago consisted of a technical representative from West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth. Metro COG could also invite a member from Horace. D. Farnsworth noted that he'll plan to get this subcommittee together to determine the best scoring for maintenance/rehab as well as EJ. Farnsworth would like to discuss this with the MTP project manager, Michael Maddox, as the new MTP will be adopted around the end of 2024. Farnsworth would like to make sure all criteria is in-line with the MTP's goals and objectives.

8. BFC Application questions (as time permits)

The Committee went over key questions which Metro COG needed the expertise from the Committee to help answer. These questions ranged from bicycle detection at intersections to bikeway maintenance to policies and ordinances. Some follow-up will be necessary with other jurisdictions, such as the local park districts.

P. Hollister noted that the application allows for up to 10 attachments. He noted that photos could be submitted. D. Farnsworth asked members of the Committee to provide any bicycle-related photos that could be good to submit as part of the application.

9. Other business

There was no additional business. The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 pm.