

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2024**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board met December 17, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in the Ed “Bosh” Froehlich Meeting Room, City Hall, 205 2nd Ave NW, Mandan, ND. Mike Schmitz presided.

Members present or participating via Zoom were Mike Schmitz, James Froelich, Keli Berglund, and Steve Schwab. Member absent was Andy Zachmeier.

Others present or attending via Zoom were Kim Riepl, Paulette Jacobsen, and Stephen Larson of the Bismarck-Mandan MPO; Deidre Hughes, Bis-Man Transit; Mike Bittner, Bolton & Menk; Will Hutchings, NDDOT; Kurt Keifer, QES; and Jason Carbee, HDR.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schmitz called the December 17, 2024 meeting of the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board to order.

MINUTES

Chair Schmitz called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2024 Meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the November minutes. Ms. Berglund seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

**2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)
AMENDMENT**

Mr. Larson presented. This month, the MPO processed an amendment to the 2024-2027 and the 2025-2028 TIP. The amendment was advertised for the required 15-day public comment period, and a public hearing was held at yesterday’s TAC meeting. No public comments were received. The amendment increases the cost estimates (as noted in Exhibit A) for a project in the TIP for RRFB installation at four school related locations in Mandan. TAC recommended approval of the amendment as presented.

Mr. Schwab asked what HEU refers to regarding this project. Mr. Larson stated it refers to the funding source. HEU indicates it is an urban safety project on a non-national highway system.

MOTION: Mr. Schwab made a motion to approve the 2025-2028 TIP Amendment as presented. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

SAFE ROUTES TO SERVICES/COMPLETE STREETS STUDY

Mr. Bittner presented an overview of the final report for the Safe Routes to Services/Complete Streets Study. The study was to aid in developing a comprehensive, integrated multi-modal transportation network to allow for safe travel within Bismarck and Mandan for all users, including populations of a traditionally vulnerable, underserved, or disabled status. They investigated issues, identified alternatives, and in the final phase, created implementation strategies. Mr. Bittner shared some demographic information on poverty, minorities, and disabilities in the Bismarck-Mandan area, and statistics on the vulnerability of bicyclists and pedestrians on the roadways. He noted these statistics have the greatest impact on low-income and Native American populations. The engagement of stakeholders and public engagement for this study was significant. A lot of the transportation blind spots in the community need to be identified through conversations with users of the network. A big part of this effort was the use of Community Advisory Groups. The consultant paid four local nonprofits to participate in the study and help connect the study with the individuals they serve in the community.

Bolton & Menk conducted a technical barriers assessment, looking at activity, amenities, and barriers throughout the transportation network. Taking all the information they received through the Steering Committee, public engagement, and technical analysis, they were able to identify priority infrastructure hotspots in both Mandan and Bismarck, evaluating the existing concerns in those areas and providing potential options for improvements. Mr. Bittner showed examples of this on the Airport Road Corridor in Bismarck, and in the Shady Acres region in Mandan. The study focuses on low cost, high impact solutions, while also providing potential long-term improvements.

The study also identified priority strategies for the community. A Transit Circulator Route is a proposed strategy for Bismarck, and Microtransit for Mandan. Another strategy proposed is Mobility Hubs, and potential locations for these were examined as part of the study. Finally, Complete Streets Policies, with a focus on Four Seasons Complete Streets, were proposed.

Mr. Schmitz asked if the Transit Circulator Route is an additional route Bis-Man Transit would be adding and populating with two vehicles per hour. Mr. Bittner confirmed this would be an additional route, or possibly a modification to an existing route. The study recognizes this would be something money would need to be set aside for, and community discussion and support would be needed.

Mr. Schwab asked how equity fits into the discussion about Microtransit. Mr. Bittner explained Microtransit can provide improved transportation connections and accessibility. Microtransit is often technology-based but is still more in-tune with the needs of populations who do not have access to other forms of transportation.

Mr. Schmitz noted the Bismarck City Commission will want details about the transit route recommendations. There is a group he is part of that will be studying transit within the City of Bismarck, and possibly more broadly.

Mr. Froelich asked about the 242 bicycle/pedestrian crashes that took place from 2018-2022. He asked where these numbers are taken from, and Mr. Bittner confirmed from Bismarck and Mandan combined. Mr. Froelich asked if this study took a deep dive into these numbers and the causes of each incident. Mr. Bittner explained the incident locations and causes vary widely. Mr. Froelich said the crash number may be a little misleading, and Ms. Berglund mentioned it is taken from a four-year period and only

goes up to 2022. Mr. Froelich said he would want to take a deeper dive into the causes of these safety incidents before recommending policies or spending money based on the data. He certainly wants to prevent crashes but wants to know more details.

Ms. Riepl said the safety numbers are raw data collected to inform the consultant about potential hotspots in the Bismarck-Mandan area. It was beyond the scope of this study to take a deep dive into causation. She would recommend taking a deeper dive into the numbers if a jurisdiction looks at pursuing a policy change based on this study. Mr. Bittner added that they used the data to identify specific areas of concern, and in those areas they did take a deeper dive into the data and it helped educate some of the solutions they proposed. Mr. Froelich thanked Mr. Bittner for this clarification.

Ms. Riepl said TAC recommended approval of the study as presented, contingent on approval by the Bismarck City Commission this evening. The Mandan City Commission approved the plan on December 3.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the Safe Routes to Services Study, as presented, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval. Ms. Berglund seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, and Steve Schwab voting against, the motion was approved.

ARRIVE 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

Mr. Carbee went through some slides providing a high-level overview of the MTP. He noted the document has been approved by all ten relevant jurisdictional boards. There was some good discussion at these approvals. There are eleven chapters in the MTP. The MTP is one of the MPO's core, federally required products. Updates are required every five years. It should align with Federal Metropolitan Transportation requirements and NDDOT's Long-Range Planning. It also seeks to set performance measures and targets for transportation in the MPO area (the Arrive 2050 sets eight goals), and to provide project lists that align with the regional vision. HDR conducted extensive public engagement (in-person and online) for the study and worked extensively with jurisdictional staff. The MTP provides demographics and existing conditions for Bismarck-Mandan, and looks at transportation safety, trends, and congestion (HDR is projecting between 30% and 40% growth in population and households through 2050). The Forecast portion of the MTP projected future growth for the region. The MTP provides a strategies toolbox and a range of potential projects for the network. HDR assessed available transportation funding. It is currently assumed that inflation will outmatch growth in revenues. The MTP includes a Fiscally Constrained Plan, which provides short-term, mid-term, and long-term transportation projects for the MPO area. Finally, the MTP includes a chapter demonstrating compliance with Federal regulations.

Ms. Berglund noted Lincoln is not usually highlighted in these kinds of presentations. They are a small but growing community, and she would appreciate in the future that they be highlighted more in these kinds of projects. Mr. Froelich agreed with this. He also asked if Mr. Carbee has any recommendations for handling the gap between assumed growth in transportation revenues and project cost inflation. Mr. Carbee said their projections are conservative. He mentioned opportunities for discretionary grants. The MTP is required to have a Fiscally Constrained Plan, which cannot cite funding

sources that are unreliable, but there are additional funding opportunities available and the MTP does include projects that could be eligible for these funds. Having potential projects in the MTP better positions the community to pursue them in the future.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the Arrive 2050 MTP as presented. Mr. Schmitz seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, and Steve Schwab voting against, the motion was approved.

2024 PAVEMENT CONDITIONS COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Mr. Keifer presented the final report for QES. He noted there are still a few roadways being investigated, so this report will be updated based on this effort. In the meantime, he shared a presentation about the report. The project surveyed the pavement conditions on approximately 225 centerline miles of collectors and arterials in the MPO area, collecting both Pavement Condition Index (PCI) values and International Roughness Index (IRI) values. As part of the project QES updated the pavement management system (PAVER) for the MPO and linked the data in this system to GIS.

As part of the project, QES updated the inventory of the MPO area's functionally classified roadways. They performed the collection with a roadway data collection system (through Roadway Asset Services), and coordinated a media event with the MPO in October so local media could film the collection vehicle. The vehicle can collect 3-D pavement imagery to help evaluate roadway conditions. This is a significant advance in technology. QES looked at PCI scores for each of the MPO's jurisdictions. 0-55 indicates unsatisfactory pavement, 56-70 indicates degraded pavement, and above 70 indicates adequate pavement. He noted that all the MPO's jurisdictions have an overall PCI score of 70 or above, which is good. It is cheaper over the long-term to maintain a roadway in good condition. QES generated a PCI map based on their data collection. There are some roadways in unsatisfactory condition, but some of these are being evaluated based on feedback received from the City of Bismarck.

As part of the analysis for this project, they evaluated maintenance activities for the region and projected potential conditions and costs for maintaining the various roadways over the next seven years. Overall, the MPO area received an average PCI score of 72.5, indicating that the MPO functionally classified pavements are in an overall adequate condition. QES recommends continuing to implement pavement preservation treatments, using Structural Testing to determine the root causes of pavement deterioration (when looking at major rehabilitation or design projects), and continuing to pursue routine pavement condition monitoring and updates to the PAVER database.

Ms. Berglund said the City of Lincoln is looking to use Mastic to do some rehab on inner-city streets. She asked if Mr. Keifer would advise them to also do some Structural Testing. Mr. Keifer said he would recommend additional testing to determine if the application of Mastic on the roadway would have the desired positive effect. He indicated he would pursue additional conversations with Ms. Berglund on this off-line.

Ms. Riepl said Mr. Keifer was unfortunately not able to get online for TAC yesterday. There were some questions from the City of Bismarck on some of the analysis, and so TAC recommended tabling this item until January to allow these questions to be resolved before final approval.

MOTION: Ms. Berglund made a motion to continue this item until January. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

SFY2026 BIS-MAN TRANSIT 5339 & 5310 GRANT APPLICATIONS

Ms. Jacobsen presented. North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) has solicited for its SFY 2026 Section 5339 and Section 5310 Grant Programs. Section 5339 is a Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Program, while Section 5310 is the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. Bis-Man Transit is requesting approval to submit grant applications for both programs.

Transit's 5339 application is for one fixed-route bus, and extra funds needed to complete the purchase of an additional fixed-route bus partially funded by an existing grant. They are also seeking funding for a power floor scrubber and eight fat-tire bike racks. If awarded, the federal share would be \$755,050, while Transit would provide a local share of \$135,950.

Transit's 5310 application would cover costs for Transit's After-hours service, Sunday service, Holiday service, Early-morning service, and salary for their existing mobility manager position. The application also includes requests to purchase four new cutaway buses to replace existing paratransit vehicles that have exceeded their Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defined useful life. The total federal share provided, if NDDOT approves all projects in the application, would be \$860,504, and Transit would provide a local share of \$333,236. TAC recommended approval of these applications, and MPO staff is requesting approval of both applications, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval at their December 17 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the SFY26 5339 & 5310 Applications as presented, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval. Ms. Berglund seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

FY 2029 URBAN REGIONAL PROJECTS

Ms. Riepl presented. Five applications were submitted to the MPO for this solicitation, all by the City of Bismarck. On December 3, the Urban Regional Prioritization Committee (consisting of Dean Schloss, District NDDOT, Gabe Schell, City of Bismarck, Jarek Wigness, City of Mandan, and Ms. Riepl) met to discuss and prioritize the projects. Engineer Schell provided his priorities to the committee, based on his expertise and perception of needs, and the Prioritization Committee voted to accept his recommendations. This prioritization is shown in Exhibit K. The Exhibit K project summary also shows the scores MPO staff gave each project based on the goals and objectives of the MTP. The scores were provided for discussion but did not impact the prioritization. NDDOT did not express concerns about the Prioritization Committee's recommended prioritization, and TAC recommended support. MPO staff also supports the committee's recommendation.

MOTION: Ms. Berglund made a motion to approve the FY 2029 Urban Regional Projects, prioritized as presented. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with

James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

FY 2029 URBAN ROADS PROJECT

Ms. Riepl presented. The MPO received one application for the Urban Roads Program this year from the City of Mandan for the reconstruction of 8th Avenue NW (from 24th Street to 27th Street) and 27th Street NW (from 8th Avenue NW to Highway 1806). The MPO and its jurisdictions met with NDDOT representatives to discuss the Urban Roads Program and the available funding for FY 2029. Increased traffic volumes and the new Mandan High School have made the 8th Avenue project a priority for the City of Mandan. They are proposing to swap this project for an Old Red Trail Urban Roads project already programmed under FY 2027. The Old Red Trail reconstruction project would then be moved into FY 2029. Based on discussion with NDDOT and the consensus reached among the MPO's jurisdictions, MPO staff recommends approval of Mandan's request to move the 8th Avenue project into FY 2027 and remove the Old Red Trail project to be considered for funding in FY 2029. The 8th Avenue project would still receive the \$4 million in federal funding scheduled for FY 2027, requiring Mandan to provide slightly more in local share. Mandan previously pursued the 8th Avenue project for FY 2028 but there was not enough funding available in this fiscal year. TAC recommended approval of Mandan's requested application and project swap.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the FY 2029 Urban Roads Project as presented. Ms. Berglund seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, Keli Berglund, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

Note: Ms. Berglund departed the meeting after this item.

FY 2025 URBAN RAIL/HIGHWAY CROSSING SAFETY PROGRAM PROJECTS

Mr. Larson presented. Exhibit S contains a summary of the 2025 Urban Rail/Highway Crossing Safety projects. The MPO received two projects from the City of Bismarck. MPO staff determined these projects are consistent with the MTP but does not have a list of MTP objectives for scoring Urban Rail projects. NDDOT's solicitation for Urban Rail is less formal than most of their other grant programs and does not require an application form. MPO staff has not historically recommended prioritizing Urban Rail projects when forwarding to NDDOT. Urban Rail projects awarded funding through FY 2026 will be funded 100% federally.

The first project is on the 26th Street Railroad Crossing between Main and Bowen Avenues. The project would involve the installation of additional panels on the west side of the railroad crossing to function as a sidewalk for pedestrians and complete the recent pedestrian improvements made in the project area. The second project is at the 24th Street Railroad Crossing between Main Avenue and Front Avenue, for the replacement or removal of the southern two railroad crossings. Any crossing not in use will be removed, and any crossing still being used will be replaced. TAC recommended approval of both applications to forward to NDDOT, unprioritized.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the FY 2025 Urban Rail Projects as presented, unprioritized. Mr. Schwab seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2025 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) CONTRACT

Ms. Riepl presented. Exhibit V shows the standard annual contract (with no one-time changes) between NDDOT and the MPO. It is connected to the MPO's 2025 UPWP and to the MPO's share of the 2025 Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG). The contracting parties are now listed as NDDOT and the City of Bismarck, on behalf of the MPO. This change was made because the MPO's funding is first provided by the City of Bismarck and is then reimbursed back to the City by NDDOT using CPG funds. The 2025 UPWP Contract runs from January 1 through December 31 of 2025, and the contracted amount is for a maximum of \$684,174 in CPG funding to fund the federal share of MPO's 2025 UPWP. The contract has been reviewed by the City of Bismarck and will be brought to the Bismarck City Commission on December 17. TAC recommended approval of the contract as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the 2025 UPWP Contract as presented, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval. Mr. Schmitz seconded the motion and with James Froelich, Steve Schwab, and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2025 MONITORING REPORT UPDATE

Mr. Larson presented. The MPO solicited six consultants for its 2025 Monitoring Report Update and received two proposals. MPO staff scored these proposals and has selected HDR to perform the update. Mr. Larson is in the process of contract negotiations, and will start the project early next year, pending the finalization of the UPWP contract.

2025 MEETING CALENDAR

Mr. Larson presented on Exhibit W, the 2025 calendar of TAC and Policy Board meetings. TAC and Policy Board will be moving to the Tom Baker Room in Bismarck January through June and will return to Mandan next July.

ADJOURNMENT

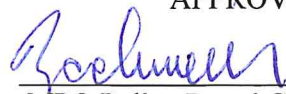
There being no further business, Chair Schmitz adjourned at 2:50 p.m. The next scheduled meeting will take place January 21, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room the City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Larson
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:



MPO Policy Board Chair

Vice-Chairman