

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 16, 2024**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met December 16, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in the Ed “Bosh” Froehlich Meeting Room, City Hall, 205 2nd Ave NW, Mandan, ND. Kim Riepl presided.

Members present or participating via Zoom were Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Kim Riepl. Members absent were Mitch Flanagan and Natalie Pierce. The Freight Industry Representative membership is vacant.

Others present or participating via Zoom were Stephen Larson and Paulette Jacobsen, Bismarck-Mandan MPO; Jason Carbee, HDR; Kristen Sperry, FHWA; Chris Holzer, City of Bismarck Engineering; Susan Dingle, Citizen; Wayne Zacher, NDDOT; Mike Bittner, Bolton & Menk; and John Forman, Ulteig.

MINUTES

Chair Riepl called for consideration of the minutes from November 18, 2024.

MOTION: Mr. Ehreth made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the minutes were 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 no 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.

Public Hearing: Chair Riepl opened the hearing for comments on the proposed amendment. Hearing and seeing no comments, Chair Riepl closed the hearing.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend approval of the 2025-2028 TIP Amendment, as presented. Ms. Hughes seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

Note: Greg Feser joined the meeting after approval of the TIP Amendment.

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 for the short-term, while also providing some 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.

Ms. Riepl and Mr. Schell spoke highly of Bolton & Menk's public engagement efforts and the final report overall. Mr. Ehreth expressed excitement about implementing the ideas in this study going forward, and Mr. Hutchings complemented the innovative nature of the study and the efforts of the study team.

MOTION: Mr. Ehreth made a motion to recommend approval of the Safe Routes to Services Study, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval. Ms. Hughes seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

ARRIVE 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

Mr. Carbee presented an overview of the final report for the Arrive 2050 MTP. He noted TAC was instrumental in reviewing the first draft of the MTP back in August and September, and so he started by giving a brief overview of the changes that have been made to the plan since that time. The Baseline Conditions chapter was extensive in the first draft, and it has since been streamlined and made more readable. All comments on the plan have been incorporated into the final report. In the Funding Chapter, they removed forecasts related to some nondiscretionary grant programs (such as the National Highway Performance Program) based on the comments they received on that. The MTP has been reviewed and approved by all five jurisdictional Planning and Zoning Commissions, as well as the five jurisdictional Commission and Councils. HDR received positive feedback throughout this process.

Mr. Carbee went through some slides providing a high-level overview of the plan. There are eleven chapters. 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. 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.

Mr. Ehreth complemented Mr. Carbee and the study team for their innovative public engagement and overall approach. He noted that the short-term project list focuses heavily on maintenance projects, due to limited flexibility with funding programs such as Urban Roads. He is not sure this was the intended consequence of the changes to these funding programs, but this is the reality the MPO area is dealing with now that funds can no longer be banked to apply them to larger projects. He thanked HDR for working through these issues.

Ms. Riepl noted NDDOT has been discussing some options for banking funds, but there is risk involved. There will be further discussion and more information about this in future.

Mr. Schell noted the MTP does not include Urban Regional projects for state highways such as State Street, since these are determined on a statewide level. The MPO jurisdictions will still pursue Urban Regional projects, but the planning for such projects is outside the scope of the MTP.

Ms. Riepl thanked the HDR team for going through the long process of an MTP update and completing it successfully. Mr. Carbee thanked the MPO and TAC for their efforts as well.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend approval of the Arrive 2050 MTP as presented. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2024 PAVEMENT CONDITIONS COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Ms. Riepl said Mr. Keifer from QES was not able to attend TAC today. The project is wrapping up, and there was a draft final report included in the packet. Ms. Riepl has heard some questions and concerns expressed about the report, and since QES is not available to address these, it may be appropriate to make a motion to continue this item until January to allow QES to address issues. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of December, so this gives them a couple of weeks to finalize everything, and everything could then be approved by TAC and Policy Board in January.

Mr. Hutchings asked if the MPO is confident the work can be completed by year end, or if a UPWP amendment might be needed to continue the project in 2025. Ms. Riepl is not sure

how long potential corrections to the final report might take, but she is hopeful this can be completed before the end of the year.

Mr. Schell said he had some questions on the report. Several of the roadways the City of Bismarck recently addressed are shown as having unsatisfactory pavement, so he wants to make sure this is accurate.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend the continuation of this item until January. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl 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. MPO staff is requesting approval of both applications, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval at their December 17 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Stromme made a motion to recommend approval of the SFY26 5339 & 5310 Applications as presented, contingent on Bismarck City Commission approval. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl 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 met to discuss and prioritize the projects. City of Bismarck Engineer Gabe 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. MPO staff also supports the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Schell noted all five of these projects have been submitted in prior years.

MOTION: Mr. Wigness made a motion to recommend approval of the FY 2029 Urban Regional Projects, prioritized as presented. Mr. Schell seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl 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.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend approval of the FY 2029 Urban Roads Project as presented. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

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.

Mr. Hutchings asked why these crossings were not included in the quiet rail zone when that was implemented. He also asked about the 26th Street project, he noted the City of Bismarck recently installed sidewalk in this area and is wondering if this project will ensure pedestrians have a dedicated path to access the Public Health building. Mr. Schell said the quiet rail project was focused on downtown, and so 24th and 26th Street were not identified since there is a less significant residential population in this area, and it is further from downtown. He said for the 26th Street Urban Rail project, they have installed sidewalk up to the railroad right-of-way, so the project would fill in that gap. He commented that these applications do not guarantee a project will be done, as NDDOT and the railroad may have different perspectives on priorities.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend approval of the FY 2025 Urban Rail Projects as presented, unprioritized. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl 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 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.

MOTION: Mr. Ehreth made a motion to recommend approval of the 2025 UPWP Contract as presented, contingent upon Bismarck City Commission approval. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Greg Feser, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl 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. The total budget for the project is \$40,000. Mr. Schell asked if this update has been done internally in the past by the MPO. Mr. Larson said yes, but it has been quite a few years since the last update, and the MPO determined some outside expertise would be helpful to update the data and format of the report. The MPO will be seeking jurisdictional input on the report, and HDR included MPO staff training in their proposal for this update, which will hopefully lead to future updates being pursued in-house.

2025 MEETING CALENDAR

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

OTHER BUSINESS

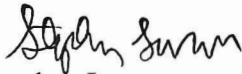
MPO Executive Director Update

Mr. Ehreth thanked Ms. Riepl for her work as interim Executive Director for the MPO. There are two finalists for the position and interviews will be held sometime in January. Mr. Ehreth believes the new Director should be on board by the time TAC and Policy Board meet in February.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m., with the next scheduled meeting to take place on January 21, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room of the City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephen Larson
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:



MPO TAC Chair