

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APRIL 14, 2025**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met April 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck, ND. Kim Riepl presided.

Members present or participating via Zoom were Ben Ehreth, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Mitch Flanagan, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Kim Riepl. Members absent were Dan Schriock, Greg Feser, 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; Joe Callaway, FHWA; John Forman, Ulteig; Susan Dingle, Citizen; Logan Beise, District NDDOT; and Luke Champa, SRF.

MINUTES

Chair Riepl called for consideration of the minutes from March 17, 2025.

MOTION: Ms. Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Mitch Flanagan, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the minutes were approved.

ARRIVE 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) AMENDMENT

Ms. Riepl presented on Exhibit A, an amendment to the Arrive 2050 MTP. The Arrive 2050 MTP was adopted in December of 2024. The purpose of the amendment is to provide revised information for the Urban Regional Road Program (through changes to text and tables) and address numerous miscellaneous changes for accuracy and clarity throughout the document. Text and tables regarding Planning Emphasis Areas were removed, as they were rescinded via a Presidential Executive Order. The MPO advertised the amendment for a 15-day public comment period, and no comments were received. The MPO also notified TAC and its state and federal oversight of the amendment. Oversight provided comment to indicate their concerns about the MTP have been addressed through this amendment.

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

Mr. Schell asked how the approved amendment will be shown on the MPO's website. Ms. Riepl indicated the MTP document will be updated and a clean copy provided online. The amendment form will also be updated after approval to indicate its approved status, and to provide record of the changes made. Mr. Hutchings thanked Ms. Riepl for the MPO's efforts to make the necessary changes to the document per North Dakota Department of Transportation's (NDDOT's) requests.

MOTION: Mr. Stromme made a motion to approve the Arrive 2050 MTP Amendment as presented. Mr. Schell seconded the motion and with Ben Ehreth, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, John Saiki, Andrew Stromme, Jarek Wigness, Mitch Flanagan, Dean Schloss, Will Hutchings, and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2025 SAFETY POLICY STUDY

Mr. Champa presented an update for SRF. They held their second Steering Committee meeting and received a lot of good feedback. They took notes for their Literature and Policy Review concerning Access Management and Site Triangle policies, which they will update for the local jurisdictions as applicable. The Literature and Policy Review is intended to provide guidance and a framework for the study going forward. One example of this from national and state literature is the Vision Zero initiative. The Steering Committee had good discussion about this, and a Vision Zero statement will be included in the study. SRF is continuing with their data review and safety analysis. They have a working memo for this effort to document how they are using specific data to support this project.

They will be sending out a lot of material before the next Steering Committee meeting in June, including a crash trend summary, draft leadership and goal setting language, and a high injury network analysis. They are working on their methodology for a systemic safety analysis, especially for the evaluation of more rural areas. There are fewer severe crashes in rural areas, so this needs to be accounted for in the safety analysis. The safety countermeasure toolkit will be discussed in June also.

SRF's subconsultant, Emergent Strategies Group, is scheduling focus group meetings, targeting May 1. There are also two Pop-Up events for the study called Community Conversations which will be held at the Earth Day Festival in Bismarck on April 29, and the Touch-A-Truck event in Mandan on May 17. The idea is to engage people about transportation safety and get feedback on specific areas where they have safety concerns.

Mr. Hutchings said he believes Bismarck and Mandan are both working on updating their zoning ordinances and he asked if there has been any discussion about these changes by the Safety Policy Study team. Mr. Champa said there have not been any discussions yet but there may be some in future, especially as it relates to Access Management and Site Triangle policies. He indicated he will reach out to Bismarck and Mandan about their updates to make sure anything relevant is incorporated into the study moving forward. Study recommendations relating to zoning could include avoiding cul-de-sacs and increasing directness of travel. Ms. Riepl indicated Daniel Nairn is leading the Bismarck zoning update and Andrew Stromme is leading the Mandan update.

2025 ITS RA

Ms. Riepl provided an update on the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Regional Architecture (RA) project, which the MPO is performing together with the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC). The update began in February and a series of small group stakeholder meetings were held in March. Some of the feedback from these meetings is still being processed and additional feedback is being sought from stakeholders who could not attend the March meetings (including the City of Lincoln Police and Public Works Departments). There is a meeting on April 17 with representatives from Engineering, IT, and Public Works departments to identify IT issues related to both the traffic and the maintenance service areas. Cybersecurity measures can create access barriers, so the MPO wants to stay ahead of these issues. By May,

the MPO anticipates being able to share insights gathered from the different use centers (Emergency, Traffic, Maintenance, Transit, and IT).

2025 MONITORING REPORT UPDATE

Mr. Larson presented. The MPO finalized its contract with HDR, the selected consultant for this project, on March 21. A kickoff meeting was held on March 31, and Mr. Larson will be meeting with the consultant regularly going forward. The project team will be reviewing the MPO's existing Monitoring Report documents for data and content and will hold a stakeholder workshop sometime in May with jurisdictional planners and engineers to better understand their data and performance measure needs. The contracted completion date for the project is December 31. Mr. Larson indicated regular updates will be provided to the boards as the project proceeds, although these updates may not occur every month.

2024 CONSOLIDATED PLANNING GRANT (CPG) REDISTRIBUTION UPDATE

Ms. Riepl presented. This was discussed briefly last month. At the MPO Directors Meeting in February NDDOT rolled out a process for redistributing unspent CPG funds. Each year NDDOT will provide the cumulative total of unspent CPG funds from the previous year for the North Dakota MPOs, and the MPO directors will have two weeks to recommend how those funds should be redistributed in the following fiscal year. The MPOs were able to recommend a redistribution for unspent 2024 CPG funds to NDDOT on March 6. NDDOT has received the request and is working on finalizing CPG estimates for FY 2026. They have until April 15 to provide this information, so Ms. Riepl hopes to have an estimate for Policy Board.

The MPO has begun work on its budget and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for 2026 and 2027 and will meet with its jurisdictions on the afternoon of April 14 to begin discussions about their priorities for transportation studies in the next few years. The 2025 CPG (the 80% federal portion of the MPO's budget) was \$684,174. The MPO typically projects a 2% increase on this amount for the following year. If this is added to the 2024 CPG redistribution the MPO anticipates, the 2026 CPG for Bismarck-Mandan should be around \$800,000. The MPO will attempt to bring the 2026-2027 UPWP back to the boards for consideration in July.

Mr. Hutchings noted NDDOT is working under a Continuing Resolution at the federal level so that makes CPG funding more fluid. They can provide an estimate on April 15, but concrete numbers will not come until later in the year.

BIS-MAN TRANSIT UPDATE

Ms. Hughes presented. Transit celebrated its 20-year CAT anniversary in May of 2024 with two free-ride weekends. It was very successful, they had 831 trips the first weekend and 914 trips the second weekend, which at that time were the biggest CAT weekends since pre-COVID. Transit switched to Brightline Insurance from North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF). They had some issues getting NDIRF to cover them up to the City of Bismarck's required level and so were having to pay for an umbrella policy to make up the difference. Brightline is utilized by several non-profit transit agencies in South Dakota and had great reviews. Bis-Man Transit is saving about \$90,000 annually with them.

Transit did a lot of community outreach in 2024, including the Community Fairs at University of Mary and United Tribes Technical College, Touch-a-Truck, the New American Job Fair, the YMCA National Senior Health and Fitness Vendor Showcase, Train-the-Trainer with Cloverdale Foods, CAT bus onboard training with Global Neighbors, paratransit training for

Missouri Valley Slope and BPS Life Education, and presentations and training at the United Way Homeless Shelter. Transit received funding through the ND Council for Developmental Disabilities to put on an introduction to CAT and paratransit training. There was not a lot of interest, but the training was recorded and can be used in the future. Transit extended its paratransit service contract with the City of Lincoln.

Bis-Man Transit has benefited from advertising revenue. They took advertising in-house in 2020 and can keep all their advertising revenues as a result. They exceeded their advertising goals for 2024 and made \$123,953. They have also had opportunity to invest in CDs and generated \$280,930 in interest in 2024. They offered free rides for election days in 2024. They provided 466 CAT trips and 303 paratransit trips on June 11, and on November 5 they provided 562 CAT trips and 358 paratransit trips. Transit received 4 new paratransit buses and 2 new vans in 2024. The buses were fleet replacements, along with one of the vans. The other van was an addition to the fleet. They held their sixth annual Stuff-the-Bus drive in December and collected over 700 items for Ministry on the Margins.

For 2024, CAT ridership ended at 121,538 trips (a 20.89% increase from 2023). This is a significant increase that is very unusual without revenue or service area changes. Paratransit ridership was 90,237, a 2.8% increase from 2023. The Black Route was the top performing route, and the Orange Route was second. At-fault accidents went down from 19 in 2023 to 14 in 2024.

Measure 1 passed in Bismarck and Mandan and will bring sales tax dollars for Public Transit, hopefully providing Bis-Man Transit the opportunity to address its budget deficit and improve its service. Just recently Transit completed its fifth consecutive clean audit, which is a great accomplishment for a small staff. Senate Bill 2254 is now law (the Urban Transit Directors in North Dakota advocated in favor). It designates \$2 million to NDDOT to provide grants to fixed-route public transportation providers for associated paratransit services for the biennium of 2025-2027. It is a one-time funding item and includes funding for a fixed-route service study. Transit will be receiving rewards from NDDOT for its SFY2026 5339 and 5310 grant applications. All the projects Transit applied for will be receiving funding. This includes the operations grants, its Mobility Manager salary, and funding for bus replacements. They have also received funding to order Fat-Tire Bike Racks for all CAT buses in the next month or so.

FY 2026 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP)

Mr. Larson presented. The North Dakota Parks and Recreation District (NDPRD) has solicited for applications for the FY2026 RTP. They opened their solicitation on April 1 and accepted applications through April 13. The MPO sent notification of this to its jurisdictions on April 4. Mr. Larson apologized it was not sent out sooner. He asked any jurisdiction who submitted an RTP application notify him so the applications can be brought before TAC and Policy Board in May for approval. Approval and a letter of support from the MPO is required by NDPRD for applicants within an MPO area, but the letter of support can be added to an application after the application deadline.

Mr. Ehreth mentioned the short application window and asked if this is a new procedure from NDPRD. Ms. Riepl said the application windows have varied considerably year-by-year for the RTP, but this is probably the tightest window so far. She believes NDPRD has been working to refine their program, and the MPO has made sure they are okay receiving MPO approval for project applications after the application window is past. Mr. Ehreth noted the RTP has been a good program for the Bismarck-Mandan area, and he hopes this continues. He thinks

the shorter window presents challenges for applicants and for the MPO. Mr. Hutchings said he was surprised by the tight window and asked if the MPO could work with its jurisdictions to pre-identify RTP projects. Ms. Riepl indicated since NDPRD is still working to refine their process she would be hesitant to act early on the program. The quality of RTP applications in the past has been good and have often led to successful awards.

ROADWAY PROJECTS

Mr. Saiki did not have an update for Morton County.

Mr. Wigness provided a City of Mandan update. They have an Old Red Trail shared use path project and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) installation project. Both projects will be starting soon.

Mr. Flanagan said Burleigh County is working on replacing the bridge on 236th Street.

Mr. Schell provided a City of Bismarck update. They have one federal aid project, a South Washington Street project. Most of the project was completed last year but there will be some landscaping, asphalt tie-in, and pavement marking items to complete. The activity on the project will be sporadic and should be completed by early to mid-summer. They have a major project being funded through state and local dollars on East Century Avenue. This is a reconstruction of Century Avenue from Centennial Road to 52nd Street, and 52nd Street from Gold Drive to Century. This will be starting soon. They will maintain two-way traffic at least to Roosevelt Drive from the west, even if it is only on a temporary road. The project will really get going once school is out. For more information on Bismarck projects go to www.bismarcknd.gov/streets.

Mr. Schloss provided an NDDOT update. At Exit 161 they have one lane closed in each direction and that will remain unchanged for some time. The interstate will be closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. on April 15 so the contractor can set beams. The interstate starting at 161 going to Menoken also has a lane closed in each direction, and they will be removing the eastbound lanes later this week. The Memorial Highway project is setting up traffic control and barriers. There will be two lanes open in each direction with a center turn lane throughout the project.

OTHER BUSINESS

NDDOT Long-Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Hutchings said NDDOT is updating their Long-Range Transportation Plan (Transportation Connection). They are asking cities and MPOs if they have any bicycle and pedestrian counts that could be integrated into the modeling for this plan.

2025 Vision Zero Conference

Mr. Hutchings said NDDOT's Vision Zero Conference will be held May 7-8 in Bismarck at the Bismarck State College National Energy Center of Excellence. The conference can be attended in-person or virtually.

TAC Member Departures & Introduction

Mr. Schloss introduced Logan Beise from NDDOT. He will be taking Mr. Schloss's position on the TAC board beginning next month. Ms. Riepl thanked Mr. Schloss for his service on TAC and she welcomed Mr. Beise to the board. Ms. Riepl further announced Andrew Stromme is leaving the City of Mandan. She thanked Mr. Stromme for his contributions. Mr. Stromme said he has learned a lot in his position and through his work on the board.

MPO Transportation Planner Opening

Ms. Riepl said the MPO received 30 applications for the open Transportation Planner position and the two-tiered interview process was concluded last week. She is pleased to announce Stephen Larson has accepted the offer to be the MPO's next Transportation Planner. She congratulated him on his new position. He will be maintaining his Transportation Specialist responsibilities until his position can be filled.

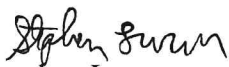
Bicycle Friendly Community Workshop

Ms. Riepl reminded the board the MPO is hosting a free Bicycle Friendly Community Workshop on May 21-22 (it is a one and one-half day event). It will start the morning of May 21 and there will be a bike audit that afternoon. The MPO has coordinated with Bismarck Parks and Recreation District to use their bike share program. Ten of the available bicycles will be e-bikes and will be distributed on an as-needed basis. The MPO is hoping to see elected officials, administrative staff, and the public at the workshop. Attendance at the entire workshop is not required. Lunch will be provided on the 21st. Ms. Riepl encouraged anyone interested to register, the registration deadline is May 14.

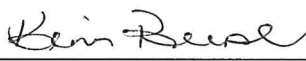
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m., with the next scheduled meeting to take place on May 19, 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