

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 17, 2026**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met February 17, 2026, 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 included Daniel Nairn, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Natalie Pierce, Will Hutchings, and Kim Riepl. Members absent were John Saiki, Jarek Wigness, Logan Beise and Mitch Flanagan. The Mandan City Planner and the Freight Industry Representative positions are vacant.

Others present or participating via Zoom included Tracy Walters and Paulette Jacobsen, Bismarck-Mandan MPO; Kristen Sperry, FHWA; Joel Mann; Bolten & Menk; and Scott Harmstead, SRF Consulting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Riepl called for public comment on items on the current agenda or the prior Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting agenda, excluding public hearing items. Seeing and hearing none, she closed the public comment period.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Riepl stated the February TAC meeting consent agenda includes the January 20, 2026, TAC meeting minutes and the Notice of 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Modifications.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Mr. Schriock seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Natalie Pierce, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

***Secretary's Note:** Chair Riepl extended congratulations to Mr. Schriock stating that he has represented Burleigh County as a TAC member for several years at the request of the Burleigh County Engineer, Marcus Hall. Mr. Hall left the Burleigh County Engineer position earlier this year and Mr. Schriock has accepted the position. Mr. Schriock thanked Chair Riepl for acknowledging his achievement.*

2026-2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Ms. Riepl stated this month, the MPO processed an amendment to the 2026-2029 TIP. The amendment was advertised for the required 15-day public comment period and no comments have been received. The public hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. in the David Blackstead room on the 2nd floor of the City/County Office Building. The amendment increases the cost estimates for a project for microsurfacing on ND 810 from the Memorial Highway Interchange to the Expressway Bridge. The cost for this project will be increased from \$196,000.00 to \$256,098.00. Staff is seeking a motion to recommend approval contingent on no substantive public comments received at the public hearing.

Secretary's Note: *Mr. Schell prompted a general discussion defining the difference between TIP amendments and TIP modifications. He noted that the TIP amendment on the regular agenda was not more restrictive than the TIP modifications on the consent agenda and asked if the MPO would have to report on them to TAC and Policy Board. Ms. Riepl stated that the cost threshold would flag an amendment to the TIP requiring the 15-day advertisement for the public hearing and require full approval of the TAC and Policy Board. Ms. Riepl also indicated that we may have an opportunity to refine the amendment requirements when we develop the 2027-2030 TIP. Mr. Hutchings stated that the amendment requirements are dictated by the 2 CFR 200 requirements; however, by looking at the language in the 2 CFR 200, we may be able to adjust the TIP reporting requirements.*

Mr. Nairn asked how the cost increase for the TIP amendment would affect the budget.

Ms. Riepl explained that the cost estimates need to be accurate within the TIP. When there is a cost increase or decrease, the TIP needs to be changed accordingly.

MOTION: Ms. Hughes made a motion to recommend approval of the 2026-2029 TIP Amendment, contingent on no public comments received at the public hearing. Mr. Schell seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Natalie Pierce, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Ms. Jacobsen stated the 2026 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Request for Proposals (RFP) was presented to TAC in October 2025. TAC recommended approval of the TDP RFP and Policy Board voted to delay the TDP RFP approximately three months pending service changes that were being implemented by Bis-Man Transit. The service changes are now anticipated to occur on April 1, 2026. The RFP has been revised to include date changes to the project schedule and the scope of work has been further refined. The TDP is approximately an eighteen-month study with a budget of \$180,000.00. Bis-Man Transit will provide a local match amount of \$36,000.00. The study will begin in 2026 and conclude before the end of 2027 as indicated in the 2026-2027 UPWP.

Ms. Jacobsen gave an overview of the revisions to the 2026 TDP RFP.

Ms. Jacobsen stated the Bismarck-Mandan MPO believes the revised TDP RFP aligns with the best interests of the Bis-Man Transit and the MPO's jurisdictions that are likely to be impacted by recommendations resulting from the plan, and staff recommends its approval.

Mr. Schell asked what direction MPO staff would contribute to the study compared to the Bis-Man Transit Board.

Ms. Jacobsen replied that the Steering Committee consists of representatives from the MPO, Bis-Man Transit, Lincoln, Mandan, Morton County and Burleigh County.

Mr. Schell asked if we had consensus among the Steering Committee members to provide direction to the consultant team.

Ms. Riepl replied this is a collaborative effort among the members. She noted the MPO works as a liaison between Bis-Man Transit and the consultant team. In October when the RFP was brought forward to TAC & Policy Board, concerns surfaced among the members regarding service changes that had not yet been implemented by Bis-Man Transit. The Policy Board asked for additional time to have conversations with the jurisdictions, elected officials and Bis-Man Transit. Ms. Riepl noted with the additional time and conversations that took place, she believes that all parties are now on the same page with the goals and revisions made to the RFP. Bis-Man Transit will benefit from any suggestions made by the committee members to assist in the direction of the TDP. She also noted this is the first TDP in the last twelve years that will allow the consultant to dive into

the service operations, rather than the financial component and provide recommendations that couldn't be made in past TDPs.

Ms. Hughes replied the TDP aligns with the Board's expectations and they want to see the plan completed with the objectives in place. Bis-Man Transit's access to additional funding from the sales tax increase allows them to seek needed service changes to better serve the communities.

Mr. Schell noted that checking in with the Bis-Man Transit Board, Policy Board and City Commissions when decision points are needed is important to inform them of the progress and direction of the TDP before the final report is presented at the end of the study.

Mr. Nairn stated that the last TDP was done in 2023 and when the new eighteen-month TDP study is completed, it will be a 2028 TDP, which would be five years by the time it's completed.

Ms. Riepl stated she anticipates that the TDP study will conclude by December 2027.

Mr. Hutchings asked if it's the desire of the City of Bismarck to have periodic checkpoints that we may want to identify in the proposal so the consultants are aware potential meeting requirements they would need to attend.

Ms. Riepl stated we have addressed presentations for the consultants. The efforts of the Steering Committee meetings and public involvement will bring those entities together at those times so we are not creating additional burdens on the Consultant.

Mr. Hutchings stated it would work to invite the Commissioners to the open houses for the public comment meetings.

MOTION: Ms. Hughes made a motion to recommend approval of the 2026 Transit Development Plan (TDP) RFP. Mr. Nairn seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Natalie Pierce, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

BISMARCK- MANDAN MPO BY-LAWS

Ms. Riepl stated last month TAC experienced audio technical difficulties and they were not able to obtain audible votes to obtain a meeting quorum. This prompted a discussion among the TAC members to change the By-Laws pertaining to the quorum requirements and review the By-Laws for other necessary changes.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the changes to the By-Laws of the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Ms. Riepl provided an example that TAC has fourteen seats and currently only twelve seats are filled. The proposed changes to the By-Laws indicate TAC would require a majority of seven voting members to obtain the meeting quorum. She explained that if the number of TAC's seats changed, the majority of voting members would also change to obtain the meeting quorum.

Ms. Hutchings asked if the changes would trigger a re-designation by the Governor's office.

Ms. Riepl replied that we have changed the composition of TAC over the years and it has not had any bearing on the designation of an MPO.

Mr. Schell noted Section VII of the By-Laws lists either the MPO Executive Director or an MPO Transportation Planner, one of whom shall act as the TAC chair. He asked if there is a reason it is listed for either one to act as the chair. He explained that the next sentence states any member may have an alternate serve in his/her place with full voting rights.

Ms. Riepl explained that there is a historical significance dating back several years. The Executive Director role for the MPO followed the Director of Community Development for the City of Bismarck. This was changed to indicate that the Executive Director would be the Principal Transportation Planner or the Executive Director would act as the chair. If the individual was not available for a meeting, it was further changed to indicate the MPO Executive Director or an MPO

Transportation Planner, one of whom shall act as the TAC chair allowing an alternate individual to chair at the TAC meetings.

Mr. Schell stated that the wording seemed redundant and he questioned whether to revise the wording or keep the current language. He noted that the language referring to the chair is a special circumstance and he can see the value in keeping the current language.

Ms. Riepl said the language has been discussed by TAC in years passed and she noted staff is not looking to make changes to the By-Laws unless something specific comes into question.

Mr. Schell noted that he is not suggesting changing the language at this time and thanked Ms. Riepl for the clarification and explanation of the language in Section VII.

Mr. Nairn referenced the title change from By-Laws of the Bismarck-Mandan Area Metropolitan Planning to By-Laws of the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization and asked if there was a change to the name of the organization.

Ms. Riepl stated in the title, the Bismarck-Mandan MPO is not the Bismarck-Mandan Area MPO, and said area should not have been placed in the title. She noted that area has been placed in the Metropolitan Planning Area. She explained that “area” does not belong in the BMMPO’s name; however, it does apply to the MPO’s boundary.

Mr. Hutchings added that the term “Metropolitan Planning Area” is consistent with the language in the CFR.

Mr. Schell suggested a change to revise “areawide planning” in line 4 of ARTICLE I to “areawide transportation planning” to clarify the type of planning.

Ms. Riepl stated she could make the change before bringing the item to Policy Board if it were the wishes of TAC.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend adoption of the By-Laws of the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization with the change to revise “areawide planning” in line 4 of ARTICLE I to “areawide transportation planning”. Mr. Nairn seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Natalie Pierce, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2025 FRINGE AREA ROAD MASTER PLAN (FARMP) UPDATE

Mr. Mann stated the Fringe Area Roads Master Plan (FARMP) consultant team is working with the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) on traffic and roadway operations elements of the technical analysis. He noted that the MPO member jurisdictions are open to a streamlined way of documenting amendments to the FARMP. He said there is no need for extra reporting on small amendments and that local governments could approve the development with basic guidelines. Mr. Mann stated the MPO has noted some corridors, such as the Beltway and the hotspot locations, may require a different level of analysis and assessment. Future development of the region suggests a need for additional transportation infrastructure to serve a regional mobility function. Mr. Mann noted that the FARMP update would be a hybrid of a major corridors plan and a framework for building out a road network as development continues. The focus on the plan would identify critical connections and corridors with regional significance and streamline a review process.

Mr. Mann stated TAC and Policy Board may be involved in making decisions on regionally significant corridors and connections. He also noted that NDDOT could possibly also take a lead on certain projects pertaining to the FARMP as well. Any non-critical corridors could be built according to guidance of the FARMP and the plan will include specific details on how non-critical roads and critical roads interface with one another and the essential components.

Mr. Mann stated that Stakeholder work sessions would focus on specifics of the network and bring user perspectives to the planning effort to allow critical corridors to be defined. This would

include focused conversations with a smaller set of stakeholders directly involved in fringe area development. A pair of extensive design workshops addressing Mandan and Morton County, and the other addressing Bismarck, Lincoln and Burleigh County will focus on potential key corridors and hotspots. They will also host a workshop for NDDOT to address key planning and project development. He noted the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber EDC has reached out to facilitate public outreach and involve the public and he will update the Boards on this effort as it plays out.

Ms. Riepl asked if Mr. Mann was seeking feedback today from TAC, specifically regarding what he was envisioning as perhaps a greater leadership commitment for the role that TAC might play in the FARMP.

Mr. Mann replied he is sharing this concept for the first time and he isn't going to put anyone on the spot today. He stated he would work with Stephen Larson to gather any feedback or comments from TAC and Policy Board members after the meetings today. Once we have a concrete idea of the MPO's leadership role, feedback from TAC and Policy Board may be obtained in subsequent months.

Mr. Schell noted conversations regarding the amendment process before the plan is done pertains to the high level of the plan. He said that the amendment process is critical for the plan to be successful and he appreciates the advanced opportunity to look at ways to streamline the process.

Mr. Nairn commented that while the FARMP plan is going on, the City of Bismarck is changing the existing plan. Next week, the Bismarck Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing for a major street plan amendment, which is the City of Bismarck's version of a FARMP, and the developer is asking to shift one of the alignments which entails coordination that needs to happen between the requester and other adjoining landowners. The primary barrier that the City of Bismarck faced is working with individual landowners who were not aware of the FARMP process. Staff explaining to people what various lines on maps mean, if it's a requirement to build a road, and who is paying for the road are frequent questions that have come up. Recognizing the need to provide clarity on the specifics of the FARMP to each individual landowner is a priority.

Mr. Hutchings asked Mr. Nairn if the City of Bismarck was continually updating their plan to match the FARMP.

Mr. Nairn replied that when the FARMP update is completed, the City of Bismarck would adopt the FARMP to match.

BIG SKY PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY (BSPRA) UPDATE

Ms. Riepl stated TAC and Policy Board approved the Government Partners Program (GPP) of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's (BSPRA) 2026 membership and signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) at the December meetings. BSPRA Board meetings occur every other month and the first meeting of the year occurred on January 14, 2026. At their meeting, they had an election of officers which reinstated the current Board members. The Board members were asked to state their personal goals and three of them stated that extended outreach to North Dakota, including the Bismarck-Mandan area was a priority. Ms. Riepl stated she has received correspondence from BSPRA regarding scheduling meetings and engaging in public forums. Representatives from BSPRA are planning to visit the north coast corridor communities in North Dakota, including the Bismarck-Mandan area, later this spring. Their desire is to coordinate with BMMPO and the jurisdictional teams. She noted BSPRA has a corridor ID project underway and they have fully completed Phase I and are moving on to Phase II of the plan, which is the Service Development Plan. The Federal Railroad Administration has enacted changes that may lighten some of the requirements. She stated she would be looking forward to hearing additional information pertaining to the progress of the Service Development Plan.

Ms. Riepl stated it was suggested to her, to facilitate a round table discussion meeting with Principals from the BMMPO and the jurisdictions and other surrounding communities such as Valley

City, Jamestown, Dickinson, and Beach, ND. She noted that she would bring this to the Policy Board meeting and ask for their feedback and direction regarding scheduling this meeting. The next BSPRA Board meeting will be held on March 12, 2026, and encouraged anyone that is interested to attend remotely.

Mr. Hutchings asked if Ms. Riepl would include Grand Forks and Minot in the roundtable meeting as they could see impacts to ridership levels and station riders.

Ms. Riepl stated her intentions were to invite the jurisdictions along the proposed service line, which is currently the BNSF rail. The intent of the meeting would be to prepare for future meetings with BSPRA when they come to us to present suggestions for public engagement.

Mr. Hutchings stated that he concurs with keeping this meeting local to communities along the potential rail line.

2025 BIS-MAN TRANSIT STATE OF TRANSIT UPDATE

Ms. Hughes with Bis-Man Transit stated per Bismarck City Commission approval, effective April 1, 2026, Bis-Man Transit will be proceeding with the Service Hour Expansion. This will increase the operating hours by four additional hours daily affecting both the Fixed Route and Demand Response Services. She noted Bis-Man Transit will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday – Friday for the Fixed Route and 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday. She said they hope to see an increase in ridership immediately; however, significant adjustments can usually take six to twelve months to see changes.

Ms. Hughes stated the proposed changes for the Demand Response Service on Sundays were also approved by the Bismarck City Commission. She noted the new hours of operation for Paratransit Service will be 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays beginning April 1, 2026. For the first time, citizens will be able to utilize Public Transit Services on Sundays and Holidays, as Bis-Man Transit has not offered services on these days in the past.

Ms. Hughes stated the general public will also be invited to utilize the Demand Response Service on holidays. Both of these services will be operated separately so Paratransit certified riders will be on separate buses than the general public. This will allow Bis-Man Transit to monitor how effective the service is and whether they will need to make adjustments in the future. Scheduling for the Demand Response Service and Paratransit can be done up to fourteen days in advance; but must be scheduled at least one day in advance and the cost will be \$3.00 per ride.

Ms. Hughes stated that Bis-Man Transit has also entered into contract negotiations with WeDriveU. If the contract is approved, WeDriveU will be reducing their hourly rate and accepting our three additional contract years. This contract will be presented to the Board of Directors next week.

Ms. Hughes stated Bis-Man Transit needs six new CDL drivers to cover the expanded service hours. She noted that four drivers are currently pending background checks for possible hire with Bis-Man Transit. She also noted that they are in the process of updating our website rider guides and working on promotional materials for the service changes. In March, Bis-Man Transit will be pushing on social media and traditional media to promote the service changes.

Ms. Hughes stated Bis-Man Transit has several upcoming projects including our national transit database reporting, an audit and procurement projects that include a number of facility maintenance items. She noted they received one replacement paratransit vehicle that was totaled due a not-at-fault accident and that Bis-Man Transit also has four replacement paratransit buses on order to replace vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life.

Ms. Hughes stated Bis-Man Transit has not received the FY 2026 5307 apportionment yet and they are looking forward to receiving this soon. There are also a few CDs coming due this month that might not be able to be reinvested until we know what that actual dollar amount is from the apportionment.

Mr. Schell asked if a person requesting a ride twenty-four hours in advance would know their time of pickup and estimated time of arrival.

Ms. Hughes replied when a person schedules a ride, they are given a thirty-minute pick up window and once the bus arrives, the individual has five minutes to board the bus or let the driver know they are ready to be assisted to be boarded. She also stated they have text alerts that their patrons can sign up for letting them know the driver is on the way and provide heads up to keep an on-time schedule.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m., with the next scheduled meeting to take place on March 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck.

Respectfully Submitted,


Tracy Walters
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:



MPO TAC Chair