

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY BOARD MEETING
MARCH 17, 2026**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board met March 17, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck, ND. Chair Schmitz presided.

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

Others present or attending via Zoom included Kim Riepl, Stephen Larson, Tracy Walters and Paulette Jacobsen of the Bismarck-Mandan MPO; Deidre Hughes, Bis-Man Transit; Joel Mann, Bolton and Menk; and Will Hutchings, NDDOT.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schmitz called the March 17, 2026, meeting of the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Schmitz called for public comments on items on the current agenda or the prior Policy Board meeting agenda, excluding public hearing items. Seeing and hearing none, he closed the public comment period.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Schmitz called for a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

MOTION: Mr. Bakken made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with Mr. Froelich, Mr. Bakken and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026-2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Mr. Larson 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 amendment adds a new statewide project to the TIP for Automatic Traffic Record (ATR) maintenance. The project includes one location in the MPO area in Bismarck. The cost for this project is \$1,127,945. TAC has recommended approval of the 2026-2029 TIP Amendment at their meeting on March 16, 2026.

MOTION: Mr. Froelich made a motion to approve the 2026-2029 TIP Amendment. Mr. Bakken seconded the motion and with Mr. Froelich, Mr. Bakken and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026-2029 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Mr. Larson stated this month, the MPO processed a second amendment to the 2026-2029 TIP. The amendment is being advertised for the required 15-day public comment period. The public hearing will be held on Friday, March 27, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. in the David

Blackstead Room on the 2nd floor of the City/County Office Building. The amendment adds a new statewide project to the TIP for pavement markings on various highways within NDDOT's Bismarck district (including some within the MPO area). TAC recommended approval at their March 16, 2026, meeting. Staff is seeking approval contingent on no substantive public comments being received at the public hearing.

MOTION: Mr. Bakken made a motion to approve the 2026-2029 TIP Amendment contingent on no public comments received at the public hearing. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with Mr. Froelich, Mr. Bakken and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026-2027 UPWP AMENDMENT

Ms. Riepl stated she will present the first amendment to the 2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which provides updates to the work programs and the budgets for the 2026 and 2027 years. These modifications are necessary in order to revise study dates, schedules and budgets to accommodate recent delays and the addition of projects required to prepare for the update to the Travel Demand Model (TDM) in early 2027. These additional projects are necessary for the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is a required core document of the MPO. Approval by the MPO Policy Board and the Federal Highway Administration is required in order to enact this amendment.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the revisions to the 2026-2027 UPWP.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the modifications to the 2026 Task 102 Projects, Description and Schedules.

***SECRETARY'S NOTE:** The Tom Baker Meeting Room experienced audio issues in which participants online were not able to hear the meeting. The issues were quickly resolved and the meeting was able to continue.*

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the amendments to the 2027 Task 102 Projects, Descriptions and Schedules. She noted that Mandan is still indicated to be a partner in the Parking Constrained Areas study in the Task 102 tables for both years but would be removed.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the amendments to the Final Products.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the amendments to the 2026 UPWP Budget table, which had no change to the budget amount, nor the federal or local share but had changes to the local match breakdown for the participating jurisdictions.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the amendments to the 2027 UPWP Budget table, which include very high-level estimates regarding funding levels. The federal funding level shows an increase which we will likely have to adjust. When the next UPWP is developed, the revised budget worksheet will be provided to make sure everyone knows how the studies are moving between the years and what that might entail.

Ms. Riepl stated TAC has recommended approval at their March 16, 2026, meeting and staff would be seeking approval of Amendment 1 of the 2026-2027 UPWP.

MOTION: Mr. Bakken made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 UPWP Amendment. Mr. Froelich seconded the motion and with Mr. Froelich, Mr. Bakken and Chair Schmitz voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026 FRINGE AREA ROAD MASTER PLAN (FARMP) UPDATE

SECRETARY'S NOTE: Mr. Mann stated due to technical difficulties; he is not able to share his screen for the presentation he had prepared for the meeting. He proceeded to provide an audible update to the FARMP.

Mr. Mann stated the evolution of a regionally significant corridor network takes a subset of the Fringe Area Road Master Plan (FARMP) network and designates corridors as regional priorities. The plan's next steps define how these priorities are identified, advanced and implemented. Significantly, the network would define major regional investments with potential MTP inclusion and NDDOT partnership.

Mr. Mann gave an overview of the recent stakeholder engagement that was held on March 11th and 12th. He noted that approximately twenty-five stakeholders representing agencies, private sector industry and community institutions had attended the meetings. This resulted in several active discussions about new connections, market trends for development and major infrastructure, including new potential bridges. He referenced a map that was provided at the stakeholder engagement meeting for the FARMP opportunities, which focuses on policy and a detailed review of the core network for regional connectivity.

Mr. Mann stated 66th Street NE provides a continuous connection from north to south across fringe growth areas, including East Bismarck and Lincoln. He noted that 80th Street could be a preferred location for an interchange with I-94 due to emerging plans with the FARMP and its connection between Lincoln and the northeast fringe areas of Bismarck. He also stated that 66th Street East to 71st Avenue North connects north Bismarck growth areas, provides regional ties with potential north river crossings and offers access to I-94.

Mr. Mann stated the 57th Avenue extension is the western extension of the 71st Avenue east-west corridor, selected because it links to a preferred candidate for a new northern Missouri River Crossing. He noted that topography issues are being identified and discussed as the FARMP study progresses.

Mr. Mann stated the McKenzie Drive corridor is currently a collector street covering a short distance which features an interchange with I-94 and Bismarck Expressway. He noted that potentially extending this corridor across the Heart River would provide connectivity directly to expanding southwest neighborhoods of Mandan and not require these areas to travel through downtown Mandan while traveling to Bismarck.

Mr. Mann noted the next steps for the FARMP project will include outreach discussions and community outreach events that will take place in late March or April in coordination with NDDOT.

Mr. Bakken noted that on the FARMP draft map that Highway 1804 and Highway 1806 are mislabeled.

Mr. Mann replied that he would make that correction to the map.

Mr. Schmitz said that the stakeholder groups were engaged in the meetings and noted they had received good feedback from the groups.

FY27 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) SOLICITATION

Mr. Larson stated the North Dakota Parks and Recreation District solicitation for the fiscal year 2027 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) will open April 1, 2026, and close on April 13, 2026. The MPO has sent notice to the jurisdictions in February so that they may coordinate with the MPO to obtain project approval at the April or May TAC and Policy

Board meetings. He noted the letter of support can be provided after the application window, since the timeframe does not align with the TAC and Policy Board meeting schedule.

Mr. Bakken noted that Burleigh County will be submitting applications for the FY27 Recreational Trails Program.

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

Ms. Jacobsen stated the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Transit Development Plan (TDP) was sent out on February 19, 2026, and the deadline was March 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. She noted they have received four proposals that are currently being verified. The members of the selection committee will be Deidre Hughes, Bis-Man Transit; Mayor Berglund, City of Lincoln; Jim Neubauer, City of Mandan; and Isak Johnson, City of Bismarck. She noted that the goal is to have the selection committee conduct interviews with the proposing consultants within the week of April 13th. The MPO expects to bring the top-ranked consultants to TAC and Policy Board for possible approval at the April Board meetings.

SPRING DIRECTORS MEETING REPORT

Ms. Riepl stated that NDDOT and the North Dakota MPOs held their spring MPO Director's meeting on March 3, 2026. She noted NDDOT is in the midst of the update to their Long-Range Transportation Plan right now. NDDOT is excited to announce that they have an interactive funding tool which is designed so that people can budget their monthly transportation costs. Ms. Riepl noted the tool will assist with monthly transportation budgeting in your personal household and she encouraged everyone to try the interactive tool. The link for the interactive tool is www.dot.nd.gov/transportation-connection and can also be found on NDDOT's website.

Ms. Riepl stated there is approximately \$352,000 of unspent Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) funds for fiscal year 2025 amongst the four MPOs.

- Central Dakota MPO reported \$38,000 in unspent CPG funds.
- Grand Forks, East Grand Forks MPO reported \$94,000 in unspent CPG funds.
- Fargo-Moorhead Metro COG (FM COG) reported \$65,000 in unspent CPG funds.
- Bismarck-Mandan MPO reported \$155,000 in unspent CPG funds.

Ms. Riepl explained that the MPOs had various reasons for being unable to spend down the CPG funding completely. The Bismarck-Mandan MPO experienced staffing and capacity issues in 2025 and spent the first six months filling positions and training staff. The four ND MPO Directors met to discuss their needs as far as projects and funding. The MPOs had two weeks to make a recommendation and provide that information to NDDOT. She noted that a signed letter was sent to NDDOT on Friday, March 13, 2026, stating that the Bismarck-Mandan MPO is requesting to receive approximately \$86,000 in turnback funds. NDDOT's decision must be identified by April 15, 2026, and if the MPOs request is approved, these funds will be allocated within the 2027 budget and work program needs. Turnback funds will also be distributed between FM COG and Grand Forks, East Grand Forks and Central Dakota MPO, who contributed \$10,000 of funding to other MPOs in the state. NDDOT will address the recommendations of the MPOs and potentially send a letter of approval pending their review.

Ms. Riepl stated Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA); Surface Transportation Bill is set to expire on September 30, 2026. She noted Congress is preparing

for the next surface transportation reauthorization and approval from Congress is necessary for the BASICS Act to take effect.

Ms. Riepl gave an overview of the proposed BASICS Act and provided examples of how it would affect the four ND MPOs. She noted the bill is a bipartisan act developed in February 2026 by U.S. Representatives Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.) and Rob Bresnahan (R-Pa.). The legislation aims to improve federal transportation programs by focusing on local projects, supporting rural infrastructure, and enhancing community input in transportation planning. She also discussed the importance of all four of ND MPOs acting together to draft a letter of support stating their needs, concerns and priorities for the BASICS Act. She noted that NDDOT has proposed their own recommendations on the BASICS Act and would not be in collaboration with the MPOs in their letter of support; however, NDDOT has encouraged the MPOs to draft their own letter of support.

Mr. Bakken asked if the draft letter of support would be presented to TAC and Policy Board at the April meetings.

Ms. Riepl replied yes, that is correct. She noted that a letter of support drafted by all four MPOs would potentially hold more weight for ND's recommendations of the BASICS Act.

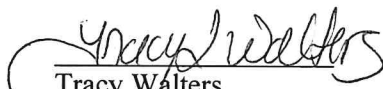
Ms. Riepl stated the last item from the Spring Directors meeting is that the NDDOT announced that they will resume the Urban Interstate Priorities Process (UIPP). She noted it has been several years since discussions have taken place and that meetings will be scheduled for this summer to have conversations to address interstate priorities.

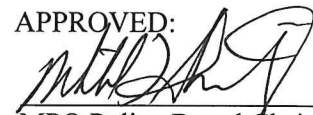
OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Schmitz adjourned at 2:08 p.m. The next scheduled meeting will take place April 21, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck.

Respectfully submitted,


Tracy Walters
Recording Secretary

APPROVED: 
MPO Policy Board Chair