

BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APRIL 20, 2026

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met April 20, 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, Tim Jacobs for Dan Schriock, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings, and Kim Riepl. Members absent were Mitch Flanagan and Natalie Pierce. The Mandan City Planner and the Freight Industry Representative positions are vacant.

Others present or participating via Zoom included Stephen Larson, Tracy Walters and Paulette Jacobsen, Bismarck-Mandan MPO; Kristen Sperry, FHWA; Paul Benning; WSB Engineering and Dave Mayer; Bismarck Parks and Recreation.

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 called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda item.

MOTION: Mr. Nairn made a motion to approve the consent agenda item. Ms. Marshik seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

FY 2027 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) APPLICATIONS

Mr. Larson stated that North Dakota Parks and Recreation District (NDPRD) recently solicited for the FY 2027 Recreational Trails Program (RTP). They opened their solicitation on April 1 and accepted applications through April 13. Applications for projects within the MPO area require an MPO letter of support, which may be provided after the application window closes. Assuming TAC and Policy Board approve of the applications, the MPO will provide letters to the applicants for submittal to the NDPRD. For this year's solicitation, the MPO received one application for Bismarck Cottonwood Park South Trail Connections Project. This project is consistent with the MPO's current MTP. The MPO does not prioritize RTP projects but is asked to review and support.

The Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) is applying for a rehabilitation of shared-use trail connections within the southern portion of Cottonwood Park. The proposed project includes 5,901 linear feet of 10-foot-wide shared-use trail that is currently aged and cracking, including 176 linear feet of trail that needs to be removed or replaced. The project is located within one of Bismarck's most popular parks and includes trail sections that provide accessible routes to the ADA fishing pier at Cottonwood Pond, connection to Hidden Star Park and neighborhoods west of the park, and links to sports fields, playgrounds, and spectator areas. The total cost is \$312,500, with a requested federal share of \$250,000.

Mr. Larson invited Mr. Mayer to add additional details for the project.

Mr. Mayer stated that he didn't have anything else to add.

Mr. Hutchings asked Mr. Mayer how long they have been applying for this specific project. Mr. Mayer stated that they have submitted the project for a Transportation Alternatives Grant three years ago and submitted it to the RTP last year.

MOTION: Mr. Wigness made a motion to recommend approval of the FY 2027 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Applications. Mr. Schell seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

BISMARCK FUNCTIONAL CLASS CHANGE REQUESTS

Mr. Larson stated functional class roadways are eligible for federal funding and describes the roadway's general function within the roadway network and helps to direct federal, state and local resources to roadways. Functional Class changes have historically been processed every ten years by the MPO after the adoption of a new urbanized area boundary and after every decennial census. He noted that the MPO is moving towards a more effective system which addresses Functional Class issues as they come up. The City of Bismarck completed the extension of East Century Avenue and 52nd Street from East Century Ave to 43rd Ave and he provided a reference map of the area. With the completion of this road, the City of Bismarck has requested that these roads be functionally classified since they connect to an existing arterial on Century Ave and an arterial on 43rd Street. Mr. Larson stated that he has received comments from the City of Bismarck and Burleigh County addressing potential issues that they would like to address before proceeding with this request. He noted that the MPO is looking for a motion for this request to be reconsidered at the May TAC and Policy Board meetings.

Mr. Schell added in this particular area or future connections of Tyler Parkway, segments of 57th Avenue and other similar type of roadways, that we would add them to the Functional Classification network. He noted that he was not initially aware of any negative impacts to calling 52nd Street a functional classified roadway, however; Burleigh County has expressed their concerns and they would like to request additional time for discussions pertaining to the issues to allow clarification on how to proceed and bring this back to the May TAC and Policy Board meetings.

Mr. Wigness asked if the newly constructed portion of East Century needs to be classified at the same time as 52nd Street.

Mr. Schell replied yes, the proposed limits to be functionally classified are from Roosevelt Drive to 52nd Street on Century Avenue. The limits from 52nd Street are 43rd Avenue, a functionally classified arterial, to the extended Century Avenue.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to continue the Bismarck Functional Class Change Requests to the May TAC and Policy Board meetings. Mr. Wigness seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) CONSULTANT SELECTION

Ms. Jacobsen stated the MPO held interviews for the Transit Development Plan (TDP) update on April 13, 2026. The three firms that were interviewed included Bolton and Menk, Houston Engineering, and SRF. The selection committee consisted of representatives from Bis-Man Transit, City of Bismarck, City of Lincoln, and City of Mandan. Ms. Jacobsen stated she served as a moderator for the interviews. She noted that all of the consultants did an excellent job putting together proposals for the project. The selection committee has promoted Bolton and Menk as the preferred consultant for the TDP. The MPO is requesting recommended approval of the selection for Bolton and Menk as the consultant for the project and permission to pursue contract negotiations. The MPO will execute the contract after legal and

NDDOT review. The QBS letter certifies that the MPO has complied with NDDOT's qualification-based selection requirements for the consultant selection process and will be signed by the Policy Board Chair after their meeting.

Mr. Hutchings asked how many consultant proposals were received for the TDP.

Ms. Jacobsen replied that they received four consultant proposals.

MOTION: Ms. Hughes made a motion to recommend approval of the 2026 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Consultant Selection of Bolton and Menk. Mr. Nairn seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026 PASSENGER RAIL STUDY RFP

Ms. Riepl stated the objective of this project is to identify and evaluate passenger train station corridors and potential site locations for a new passenger rail service station or stations and platforms to serve the MPO area. She stated the study aims to determine whether a single station or multiple stations would best serve the MPO area and where the preferred potential rail station or platform locations rank, based on a matrix developed using the evaluative criteria established through the study. This study will be approximately twelve months starting in July 2026 and concluding in July 2027. The budget for the study will not exceed \$225,000.00 and all five MPO jurisdictions are indicated in the 2026-2027 UPWP as partners. The study area will include the BNSF rail corridor in the MPO planning area that extends from the westernmost boundary of the MPO in Morton County to the MPO's easternmost boundary in Burleigh County. She noted the RFP was developed and provided to the jurisdictional representatives for review and comments and all comments have been addressed. If the RFP is approved, the MPO expects to have this posted on the North Dakota website by Friday, April 24, 2026, with a proposal deadline of Friday, May 15, 2026. The consultant interviews would occur the week of June 8th through June 11th and the consultant approval would happen at the June TAC and Policy Board meetings.

Ms. Riepl stated comments have been received and minor changes have been made to the RFP. She provided an overview of five significant changes to the RFP.

- The Burleigh County logo has been updated.
- The Content of Proposals section was updated to clarify SF-330 form requirements.
- The Local Existing Conditions section has been modified to include restructuring of where the description of the rail line and historic depot in Mandan occurs.
- The Study Area map was replaced with an updated version eliminating ETA references and the map's name has been changed.
- The Schedule for Contract Development and Final Project Deadline has been modified to indicate a potential presentation to NDDOT in May 2027.

Ms. Riepl noted the RFP contains standard language and format included with standard RFPs. She stated that a requirement to the Draft and Final Report section was added which addresses website content accessibility and provides a link to ensure conformance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements. Documents will require an accessibility check report from a tool such as PAC 2026, Adobe Acrobat's built in checker, or similar tool.

Ms. Riepl stated there will be two rounds of public engagement in both Burleigh and Morton County. This study will also coincide with outreach that is being conducted by Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) in relation to their corridor ID project. She noted that the MPO understands that it is imperative to keep our local leaders and elected officials informed with study activities and rail related developments.

Mr. Hutchings noted that the accessibility standards compliance has been granted an additional year for compatibility requirements. He commended the MPO for putting these efforts into effect now.

Ms. Riepl stated that by the time the current studies are complete, that the accessibility requirements will be in place.

Mr. Schell asked if there is specific criteria that BNSF would require for the station's siting.

Ms. Riepl stated that passenger rail service would use the existing BNSF rail line and while there may be no specific requirements for passenger rail stations through BNSF, there are minimum requirements through the Federal Railroad Administration. She noted that having BNSF and Amtrak representation on the steering committee will be a key component for the study.

Mr. Schell asked Ms. Riepl if she had conformation from BNSF or Amtrak representatives to serve on the steering committee.

Ms. Riepl said she did not have confirmation from either party. She also noted that the steering committee composition is very robust and while the MPO recognizes the need to include specific representatives for their engagement and input on the study. The MPO will be sensitive to whatever time commitments they may be able to accommodate in order to get their input at regular intervals throughout the study.

Mr. Nairn stated a critical element is the coincidence of the Corridor ID Service Plan at the nationwide level. He noted discussions based on the service plan may determine the number of stations in our area.

Ms. Riepl stated phase two of the Corridor ID Service Plan will include station determination and scheduling. She noted that rail stations may be placed approximately one-hundred miles apart, however; rural communities and BSPRA representatives have stated that that may be too far. The bordering communities advocating for rail station placement in their area will help determine their locations. She added that the MPO is preparing to provide station placement recommendations to BSPRA when they enter that phase of the study, potentially in the fall of 2027.

MOTION: Mr. Schell made a motion to recommend approval of the 2026 Passenger Rail Study RFP with the changes as presented. Ms. Marshik seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

BASICS ACT LETTER OF SUPPORT

Ms. Riepl stated on February 9, 2026, a bipartisan bill was introduced to the US House of Representatives and it was for reauthorization legislation for surface transportation. She noted that the MPO Executive Directors in ND engaged in collaboration to draft a letter of support for the BASICS Act. The Executive Directors had a chance to discuss the BASICS Act and they have agreed to develop a different approach to their letter of support. Many of the provisions are beneficial in terms of how they are stated in the bill, however; it is hard to determine how they will impact the MPOs directly at a local or regional level. The MPO Executive Directors have determined that they would like to offer support in an outcome-based approach rather than for specific provisions within the bill. She noted that there are five sponsors of the BASICS Act bill which include two Democrats and three Republicans. The BASICS Act has not yet passed thru the US House of Representatives and the bill will potentially go thru several iterations before it passes. She also stated it may be possible that the MPOs will be operating under a continuing resolution of the existing bill. Ms. Riepl proposed that the four ND MPO Executive Directors be granted more time to determine the composition of the letter of support. She is seeking a motion to recommend that the BASICS Act letter of support be continued to the May TAC and Policy Board meetings.

Mr. Schell asked if Ms. Riepl anticipated having to bring the BASICS Act letter of support back to TAC.

Ms. Riepl stated that formal Board action is necessary to have the Policy Board Chair sign the BASICS Act letter of support, so it would need to be brought back to TAC also.

MOTION: Mr. Wigness made a motion to recommend the continuation of the BASICS Act letter of support to the May meeting. Mr. Schell seconded the motion and with Daniel Nairn, Tim Jacobs, Deidre Hughes, Gabe Schell, Loretta Marshik, Jarek Wigness, John Saiki, Logan Beise, Will Hutchings and Chair Riepl voting in favor, the motion was approved.

2026 FRINGE AREA ROAD MASTER PLAN (FARMP) UPDATE

Mr. Larson stated the Bismarck Mandan MPO is currently planning to hold its next round of public engagement activities in early May 2026. The public engagement meetings will include interactive exercises that will share the draft plan process and allow participants to engage in the planning process. He noted that the Travel Demand Modeling (TDM) with ATAC is nearly concluded and the FARMP planning team will begin to address tradeoffs and treatments for the hotspots that were identified in the RFP.

Mr. Larson stated that the FARMP planning team is considering how to define each significant corridor network to specific connections that surround them. He noted that draft plans, maps and documents will become available to the public defining the corridor network for staff, the steering committee, and the public to comment on. He anticipates that the FARMP updates will become more robust as the FARMP heads into the final months of the study and the draft of the final plan is being prepared.

FY 2026 SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A) NOFO UPDATE

Ms. Riepl stated the FY 2026 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was announced on March 26th, 2026. This particular grant offers a 60-day application window and applications must be received by May 26, 2026, at 4:00 pm. She noted the Safety Policy Study that was completed in December 2025, was geared specifically towards making applications for implementation projects from the SS4A. Eligible applicants include the MPO's counties, cities, villages, towns and tribes. She noted that the state DOTs are not eligible to apply for these funds. Approximately one billion dollars in funds are available through this funding opportunity. For implementation grants there is over \$687,000,000 and approximately forty to seventy awards will be issued through this particular solicitation. She noted that the identification of the high injury network, the leadership goal and commitment (or Vision Zero) statement for the MPO area adopted by the Policy Board, and the safety countermeasures provided were laid out as a safety action plan so that our jurisdictions would be able to take advantage of this final effort in the SS4A funding opportunity. She noted that she has sent information to all of our jurisdictions regarding the SS4A funding opportunity and encouraged them to take advantage of this program.

PASSENGER RAIL ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION UPDATE

Ms. Riepl stated that the Policy Board has directed the MPO to reach out to principals in communities along the existing BNSF rail corridor in ND to start discussions regarding the restoration of passenger rail in ND and what implications that might bring to those communities. She noted that she has reached out to Mayors, Commissioners and City Administrators in communities including Valley City, Jamestown, Bismarck-Mandan MPO area jurisdictional partners, Dickinson, Medora and Beach to set up a round table discussion to find out what the restoration of passenger rail in ND would entail for these communities. She is narrowing down a possible date to host the meeting and anticipates sending invitations out within the next week.

Ms. Riepl stated that on May 12th, the Bismarck-Mandan EDC will host a Local Issues Committee. She noted that she would like to bring the topic of Passenger Rail in the Bismarck-Mandan area to their attention for support of our efforts with Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA).

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) WEB CONTENT ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES (WCAG) UPDATE

Ms. Riepl stated the Department of Justice released guidelines on April 24, 2024, for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as regulations as part of Title II. This guidance requires that all website content be accessible to those with disabilities. The deadline for ADA WCAG compliance is April 24, 2026, for larger communities with a population of 50,000 or more. The MPO experienced confusion on what this entailed regarding new documents, existing documents, and archival options but has been working hard to ensure that its documentation moving forward will be accessible for website posting. The City of Bismarck has taken a proactive approach to contract with a service that will convert the MPO's existing documents on the website to be accessible in an HTML accessible format. Last week, the MPO received word that the deadline for the ADA WCAG requirements would be extended by one year, so the deadline is now April 24, 2027.

Mr. Hutchings added that the ND State Information Technology Department (ITD) is looking into the one-year ADA WCAG extension deadline. He noted the ND State ITD is still moving forward with plans to update the state website for ADA WCAG compliance.

Ms. Riepl asked that if anyone finds a broken link on our website due to performing update issues, to please contact the MPO directly so the issues can be fixed.

Mr. Nairn stated that he confirmed that the ADA WCAG compliance deadline has been extended by one year and the new compliance deadline is April 24, 2027.

Ms. Hughes asked Ms. Riepl for the name of the service that the City of Bismarck is contracting with for the ADA WCAG compliance.

Ms. Riepl replied that it is Doc Access through Civic Plus.

Mr. Hutchings noted that the State has ADA compliance resources available also and to reach out if she needs assistance with the compliance update.

ROADWAY PROJECTS UPDATE

NDDOT:

Mr. Beise stated they have three current projects. The first is on I-94, Exit 161, they are putting up traffic controls and will begin paving the temporary ramp and construction will begin on the new permanent southeast ramp. The second project is on Memorial Highway, phase one, they will begin pouring an 800-foot stretch of concrete and also begin working on the water main shortly. Their third project is phase two of Memorial Highway which began last week. Traffic control has been set up at the Main Street intersection of Memorial Highway and the signal will be removed. They will be using a temporary scanner signal and pouring concrete next week and setting up traffic control underneath near the railroad bridge. He noted the path will be closed in the area next week.

City of Bismarck:

Mr. Schell stated the City of Bismarck has two current projects that appear on the STIP. The first is a signal replacement and left turn modification for the intersection of Century Avenue and 19th Street, and the other is a rectangular rapid flash beacon at the intersection of Jericho Road and Centennial Road. Both projects are under contract.

Burleigh County:

Mr. Jacobs stated they have received a flex funding grant for Centennial Road. This is a microsurfacing project that starts at Jericho Road and goes to Highway 83. They are also doing a pavement rehabilitation project on 71st Street from Aleutian Drive to Centennial Road and lighting will be added to the intersection for this project also.

- City of Lincoln:** Ms. Marshik stated the City of Lincoln is working on building their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) program and they are currently conducting several studies right now. The City of Lincoln is looking forward to setting up a schedule for projects to kick off next year.
- City of Mandan:** Mr. Wigness stated they currently have two ongoing projects. The first project is an urban grants project on 1st Street, which is in phase one of three phases and the second project is on 8th Avenue NW and 27th Street, which is a reconstruction project. A public engagement opportunity will be held in May for the second project.
- Morton County:** Mr. Saiki stated he has nothing to report at this time.

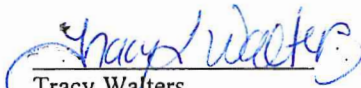
OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Riepl stated that on April 14, 2026, the NDDOT provided the Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) distribution for 2027. The Bismarck-Mandan MPO has received an additional \$36,000 due to 2024 North Dakota FTA 5304 funds. She noted that the MPO will work the additional \$36,000 into the UPWP budget. The MPO staff will be finalizing the studies and allocating the appropriate monies toward the studies to begin the development of the 2027-2028 UPWP. She noted that the jurisdictional partners would be seeing the final studies list for their approval.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m., with the next scheduled meeting to take place on May 18, 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