

Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Case Plaza Suite #232
One Second Street North
Fargo, ND 58102

Phone: 701-232-3242
Email: metrocog@fmmetrocog.org
Website: www.fmmetrocog.org

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leach@fmmetrocog.org

Welcome to Luke Champa!

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments welcomed a new staff member, Luke Champa as an Assistant Planner on February 12. Luke will be supporting Metro COG with community development activities across the metropolitan planning area. Initial projects Luke has been involved with include the Casselton Comprehensive plan and the Metro Food plan. He has also been assisting on a variety of other projects with staff.

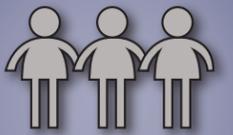
Luke is originally from Port Washington, Wisconsin, but moved to Detroit Lakes with his family during high school. He then went to NDSU to study Landscape Architecture. Luke graduated in 2015 with a B.LA and a B.S. Environmental Design while interning for the City of West Fargo Planning and Zoning department. He then relocated to rural southwest South Dakota, in the town of Custer, to work for a boutique landscape architecture design firm that works with diverse clients ranging from downtown development authorities, municipalities, and tribal governments. Luke then moved to Duluth to work in Two Harbors for the Minnesota County of Lake in the Planning & Zoning department.

Luke is ecstatic to be back in the FM area with his wife Ashley, newborn daughter Agatha, and their dog Ginger. He is thankful for the opportunity to live and work in the community he has always loved, and looks forward to contributing to the successful growth of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Planning Area.



Luke Champa with wife Ashley

Metro COG is committed to ensuring all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability/handicap, sexual orientation, or income status have access to Metro COG's programs and services. Meeting facilities will be accessible to mobility impaired individuals. Metro COG will make a good faith effort to accommodate requests for translation services for meeting proceedings and related materials. Please contact Savanna Leach, Metro COG Executive Secretary at 701-232-3242 at least two days in advance of the meeting if any special accommodations are required for any member of the public to be able to participate in the meeting.



PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!

Look for this symbol

In this issue:

Greetings from Cindy Gray, Executive Director	1
Metro Grow: 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Update	2
US 10/US 75 Corridor Study	2
MATBUS Transit Authority Study	2
Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis	3
Metro Food Plan	3
Horace Comprehensive & Transportation Plan	3
Welcome to Luke Champa!	4

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- Luke Champa.....Assistant Planner
- Savanna Leach.....Executive Secretary

Greetings from Cindy Gray, Executive Director

I am happy to be addressing our readers for the first time as Executive Director of Metro COG. The role that this agency plays in transportation planning and programming for our metropolitan area is significant, and I'm so happy to be in a position to work with our local partners to study and make decisions about the needs of our transportation system.

I've lived in this metropolitan area for over 22 years now, not including the years during which I was a student at NDSU. Before moving back to this area, I worked for the City of Irvine, California and for a consulting firm in the Twin Cities. After living in these large metropolitan areas for over 10 years, my husband and I often remark on how happy we are that we raised our family in the Fargo-Moorhead area; it has so much to offer as far as education, culture and activities, and life is a little simpler in a smaller metro area.

I worked at Metro COG in the late 1990's, after which I worked for the City of Fargo Planning Department. Over the past 13 years, I've worked as a consultant, and focused much of my planning experience and energy working on projects outside this metropolitan area. I very much enjoyed the opportunities to get to know and work with our neighbors

throughout North Dakota along with a few communities in Minnesota and South Dakota. I learned about the challenges and opportunities the oil industry brings to cities and counties, and I met some very wonderful and hard-working people throughout the region.

Now, I'm excited to focus locally on our growing metropolitan area. Each of our local partners seems focused on achieving a balance between redevelopment – adding value to areas where infrastructure already exists – and fringe area growth. This is exciting, and will hopefully allow us to focus more emphasis on preservation of our existing transportation system, and balancing this with expansion of our roadway network. One of the great things about Metro COG is that the work of the organization calls upon technical staff and leaders of each community to think about the big picture, and to consider the needs of our fellow leaders and citizens in neighboring jurisdictions. The metro area has a history of great cooperation; the need for that cooperation will continue to exist as we address the needs of both new growth areas and heightened interest in redevelopment.

Cindy Gray
Metro COG Executive Director



Cindy Gray, Executive Director (center) with husband Brad, their two sons and their families

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Metro Grow: 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Update



Metro COG is in the process of updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (L RTP). The L RTP is a long-range (25+ year) strategy and developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in multimodal transportation facilities in and around the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. The plan is updated every five years and may be amended as a result of changes in projected federal, state, and local funding, corridor and subarea analyses, and other transportation-related studies. The L RTP provides context from which Metro COG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a short-range capital improvement program for implementing interstate, roadway, transit, and bikeway projects, is drawn. The L RTP also helps identify follow-up studies included in Metro COG's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), a biannual listing of projects, programs, and planning studies developed for the metropolitan area.

The L RTP incorporates a number of different factors in determining the need for future transportation investments, including demographic forecasts for population and

employment, public preferences, and new and emerging transportation technologies. Community members in the metropolitan area play an important role in this planning and decision-making process.

For more information or to view upcoming public input opportunities, please visit www.metrogrow.org.

US 10/US 75 Corridor Study

Metro COG, in collaboration with MnDOT and the City of Moorhead, will soon begin a detailed transportation study of the US 10 and US 75 corridors in Moorhead. The purpose of this study is to identify a recommended set of potential improvement projects for consideration in connection with planned corridor improvements in 2025. The study will include a thorough review of current and future traffic operations, bicycle and pedestrian needs, transit considerations, safety reviews, stormwater requirements, and environmental assessments.

The recommendations of this study will include both short- and long-term recommendations for current and anticipated travel demand along each of the two corridors in Moorhead. These corridor recommendations will include an analysis of: number and width of lanes, planning level alignments to determine right-of-way widths, intersection configurations including turn lanes and traffic control, travel speed assessments, and potential bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.



US 10/US 75 Photo by Levi Thompson

MATBUS Transit Authority Study

Regionalized transit organizations exist across the country and are formed when a single provider is able to serve the region more efficiently than multiple agencies covering the same area. In the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, there are currently three public transit providers designed to serve key populations either geographically or by age: Fargo MATBUS, Moorhead MATBUS, and Metro Senior Ride. Additional specialized transit services are provided by Handi-Wheels Transportation, Ready Wheels, Anytime Transportation, and Transit Alternatives.

Looking to explore changes in Federal Transit Administration funding for metropolitan areas over 200,000 and the potential implications for MATBUS, Metro COG and area transit providers will be initiating the Transit Authority Study in the fall of 2018. The study will examine the current organizational and financial environments of individual agencies as they operate today and the benefits and challenges of establishing a transit authority. It will also look at whether a single regional entity would more effectively improve existing services, as well as key legal issues and potential legislation required to establish a bi-state authority.

The Transit Authority Study will provide transit service providers and local area governments a better understanding of the pros and cons of an authority and how an authority might be structured from an organizational and governance perspective. By further reviewing transit system revenues and regional funding considerations, the study will better show the financial implications of a single regional transit authority.



Photo by MATBUS

Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis

The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area has made strides toward becoming more bicycle friendly in recent years. Projects such as on-street bike lanes, shared-lane street markings, and additional shared use paths contributed to the metropolitan area being recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists in 2014. However, network gaps remain throughout the system that can create uncomfortable cycling conditions.

The Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis will seek to identify alternatives to improve bikeway facility connectivity by eliminating the highest priority gaps throughout the metropolitan area. Much of this study will focus on approximately 20 to 25 of the 119 critical gaps identified in the 2016 Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. These gaps range from short "missing links" on specific street or path corridors, to larger geographic areas with few or no bicycle facilities at all. The information provided through this analysis will identify alternatives to remedy existing gaps, concepts for design, and planning level cost estimates. The analysis will also prepare local jurisdictions to apply for grant funds to construct projects that will close existing top-priority gaps.



Great Rides Bike Share Rider Photo by Kilbourne Group

Metro Food Plan

The Metropolitan Food Systems Plan was first developed in 2013 by Metro COG. It currently serves as a guiding document for local governments to better identify and understand various food production and food security challenges and opportunities in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. The plan provides a framework for understanding the community's food system (which includes everything from growing, harvesting, transporting, consuming, and disposing of food), outlines strengths and barriers, and identifies key strategies to improve community food systems planning in the area.



Red River Market Photo by Forum Communications

The Cass Clay Food Partners and Metro COG are currently updating the area's food systems plan. The primary aim of this plan update is to address critical food systems issues including access to affordable food, public health, and economic opportunities. It is envisioned that the updated plan will provide renewed strategies that provide a road map for the future of our food community.

Horace Comprehensive & Transportation Plan

As the newest member to the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, the City of Horace and Metro COG will be initiating a new comprehensive and transportation plan in the fall of 2018. Comprehensive plans are the centerpiece of many local planning efforts at both the city and county level. A comprehensive plan articulates a community vision along with a series of goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies that guide the day-to-day decisions of elected officials and local government staff.

Combined with a detailed transportation plan addressing vehicular and multi-modal transportation system improvements, this plan will be both a physical plan and policy guide for future land uses and development decisions in Horace over the next 20 to 25 years. The plan is also intended to be reflective of the changing dynamics of the city, including measures that are likely to accelerate the desire or demand for growth in Horace.

In addition to land use and transportation, the plan is expected to examine leading demographic and socioeconomic indicators, housing, recreational needs, city facilities and services, economic development, floodplain issues, and community character and design.



Aerial View of Horace Photo by AE2S