

108th Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting
October 16th, 2019 – 3:00pm
Metro COG Conference Room

Members Present

Dan Farnsworth, Chair, Metro COG
Ryan Kota, Great Rides
Patrick Hollister, PartnerSHIP 4 Health
Christine Holland, River Keepers
Maegin Elshaug, City of Fargo Planning
Kim Citrowske, City of Moorhead Planning
Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth
Malachi Peterson, City of West Fargo Planning (proxy for Tim Solberg)
Bob Walton, NDDOT
Jonathan Atkins, City of Moorhead Engineering
Jane Butzer, MnDOT
Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Barrett Voigt, Cass County

Others Present:

Katie Kitowski, MN Green Corps
Luke Champa, Metro COG
Luke Morman, City of Fargo Planning
Linda Nelson, Citizen

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 3:05 pm. Attendees introduced themselves.

D. Farnsworth noted that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee's member Stan Thurlow passed away in September. It's believed that Stan had been a member of the Committee since its inception, representing the City of Dilworth. Stan provided the Committee with a wealth of knowledge and experience which will be greatly missed.

2. Approve minutes from July 24th, 2019 meeting

The minutes were reviewed by the Committee. A motion to approve the July 24th minutes was made by M. Peterson and seconded by P. Mastera. The minutes were passed unanimously.

3. Public input opportunity

L. Nelson attended the meeting as a citizen and inquired about how the Fargo-Moorhead area uses and plans to use technology in our bicycle / pedestrian efforts. One specific inquiry was regarding any mobile apps that are used or could be used.

D. Farnsworth noted that Metro COG recently created a bike map app for mobile devices that is free for the public. The app was created in response to public demand and replaces the paper maps that were printed for the public over the past years. Information was provided to L. Nelson about the app and D. Farnsworth encouraged her to reach out to Metro COG should she have any further questions about this app or other items pertaining to the F-M Area's bicycle/pedestrian efforts.

4. Metro COG bike/ped project updates

An update was provided to the Committee on the bicycle / pedestrian related projects that Metro COG is currently working on. All projects are consultant-led studies. The projects are as follows:

- FM Diversion Recreation Plan
- FM Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis
- Fargo Safe Routes to School Plan

A request was made by C. Holland (Riverkeepers) regarding a future pedestrian bridge at 40th Ave S/Bluestem as part of the FM Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis. She requested that the bridge be high enough to allow kayak and canoe traffic to easily be able to pass underneath. It was noted that the style of bridge that is being considered at this location will actually be much higher than the current pedestrian lift bridges. The future bridge for consideration would be high enough where it wouldn't need to be lifted during a flood event.

5. Update on next Bike/Ped Committee Citizen Rep

With the current citizen rep's term expiring December 31st, Metro COG is in the process of selecting a new citizen to serve the next two-year term. In early September, Metro COG solicited application for a citizen member to the committee. Applications were due September 30th. Metro COG received a total of five applications. A review committee consisting of four members of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee is currently reviewing the applications. The review committee will provide their rankings of candidates by October 31st and a candidate will be recommended shortly thereafter.

6. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) scoring

With the TAP applications due in the next few months, there was discussion as to how to best score and rank the projects prior to sending the rankings to NDDOT and MnDOT. It was stated that often times Metro COG's rankings (which are done with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee) don't end up being the same ranking as NDDOT or MnDOT, who ultimately select the projects.

Three options were provided to the Committee for future scoring and ranking:

- Option A – Keep the current scoring criteria
- Option B – Revise the scoring criteria for consistency with the 2045 Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Transportation Plan (to be adopted in November)
- Option C – Omit the scoring criteria and ranking altogether

Two other options were posed to the Committee from Committee members :

- Review applications and perhaps have applicants present their projects to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee and the Committee could provide pros and cons to NDDOT and MnDOT and leave out the ranking.
- After scoring and ranking, just submit the top ranked applications to NDDOT and MnDOT

After discussion, the group did not prefer Option A. Some liked the idea of Option C since it wouldn't require the time-extensive process of scoring & ranking applications for which the rankings may not be taken into consideration. However, the consensus of the Committee was to move forward with Option B. They felt this would be the best since it is good practice to rank the projects and formally submit the rankings to NDDOT and MnDOT. Also, Option B would adopt the soon-to-be approved 2045 MTP goals and objectives.

It was suggested that a subgroup could help guide these new scoring criteria. The following members offered to be on the subgroup: Jonathan Atkins, Peyton Mastera, Malachi Peterson, and a member of Fargo Planning.

Metro COG will develop draft criteria and will then work with the subgroup (either via email and/or meetings) to refine the criteria. After the subgroup is good with the criteria, Metro COG will forward to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee for comments prior to scoring the TAP projects.

7. Request for updated bikeway information

As Metro COG keeps the bike map app up-to-date, Metro COG is requesting that local jurisdictions provide Metro COG with any updates to their bicycle network. A. Pierce (Metro COG) will coordinate with local jurisdictions' GIS, Planning, and/or engineering departments.

8. Update on latest BIKE FM efforts

An update was given on the latest BIKE FM efforts. In August BIKE FM had a booth along the Streets Alive route and provided the public with educational materials, free water bottles, and promotional materials for the new Fargo-Moorhead Area bike map app.

BIKE FM plans to have a booth at a Halloween event for kids and families in downtown West Fargo. At this event, BIKE FM will hand out healthy snacks and will provide postcards to parents which will have bicycle safety tips as well as BIKE FM information.

It was also noted that West Fargo Events hopes to host a bike rodeo in June 2020 as part of a series of events at the soon-to-open Lights on Sheyenne – a mixed use development complex with a community gathering plaza. BIKE FM is working with West Fargo Events in providing assistance with this bike rodeo.

9. Update on Clay County Heartland Trail

An update was provided on the status of the Clay County Heartland Trail. It was noted that, due to lack of funding, not much progress has been made on the planning of this trail in the past year. Members of the group have been working with Minnesota legislators in a bonding bill that could provide funding for design of the Clay County Heartland Trail as well as construction of the trail near Detroit Lakes. There is a good chance a bonding bill will be passed with the upcoming legislative session. Whether or not funding will be provided for the Heartland Trail as requested is yet to be determined.

10. Excessive roadway widths – barriers to pedestrians

Committee member Jason Gates, who was unable to attend this meeting, provided a presentation for the Committee that he wished to share. D. Farnsworth presented the slide show on Gates's behalf.

The topic of this presentation was about overly-wide roads in our area. The particular case study in this presentation was 42nd St in Fargo near Kennedy Elementary School. This discussion stemmed from an individual that was nearly hit by a vehicle at a marked crosswalk which included flashing beacons. The individual was crossing this crosswalk near Kennedy Elementary School, when the vehicle in the outside lane stopped for the pedestrian but the vehicle on the inside lane did not stop (likely didn't see the pedestrian). This raised the question of why the roadway needed to be a 5-lane roadway when the traffic volumes don't warrant it.

It was suggested that these styles of roadways only encourage high vehicle speeds, encourage more car travel, bisect neighborhoods, and discourage pedestrian connectivity. This was compared to Broadway in north Fargo which is a 2-lane roadway and creates a much safer and comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Upon presentation of this to the Committee, discussion followed. Members of the Committee agreed that this is an issue and that roadways shouldn't be built in such a manner where they become barriers to pedestrians. Committee members expressed concerns about crossing other excessively-wide roadways such as 32nd Ave S and 45th Street in Fargo. It was noted that the City of Fargo is changing how they plan and design roadways to better accommodate pedestrians. Some examples can be seen with the re-design of Main Ave in downtown Fargo from a 5-lane roadway to a 3-lane roadway. Another example was the design of 25th St south of 52nd Ave S.

As a follow-up to this presentation, Metro COG will forward this presentation to Jeremy Gorden (Fargo Engineering) as he was unable to attend the meeting. It was encouraged for jurisdictions to consider make future major roadways more pedestrian-friendly and not overbuilt roadways as this is a hindrance to pedestrian movement, reduces neighborhood livability, and increases roadway construction & maintenance costs.

11. Other business

P. Hollister notified the Committee about Metro COG's open house on October 17th from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm which will showcase Metro COG's newly-remodeled space.

P. Hollister also notified the Committee about an open house for All Aboard Minnesota, a group looking to get reliable passenger rail service between Chicago and Fargo. The open house will be held at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead on October 30th from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned 4:25 pm.