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You receive this newsletter because you are identified as person and/or agency who is considered important to the implementation of Metro COG projects and programs. If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter or you wish to begin receiving this newsletter electronically, please contact Nakhaly Swearingen at:

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## Welcome and Introduction of Nakhaly Swearingen

Hello, my name is Nakhaly Swearingen and I recently joined the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments as their new Executive Secretary replacing Kate Wurtzler. As a military brat, I am not really from "anywhere" although my family has settled in the Pacific Northwest area (Portland, OR).

I am married with 3 girls (2 college aged and a 6 yr. old) and have spent the last 26 years as an active duty spouse traveling around the U.S and the world with my family. My husband recently retired and we are currently living in Fargo so he can complete his PhD in Logistics. I am also working on my degree at Sullivan University in Human Resources Management and Health Care Management.

I have come to enjoy living in Fargo and have taken every opportunity to venture out and explore the Midwest including the beautiful lakes in Minnesota. In my free time, our family loves to travel, camp, hike and taekwondo.

I am excited to be a part of Metro COG team and hope I can help this region grow and develop in a smart, livable, and sustainable way that creates an environment where its citizens can flourish.



**PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY!**

Look for this symbol

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## Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Signed into Law

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or FAST Act. The FAST Act authorizes a total of \$305 billion over five years to improve the nation's surface transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, transit systems, and rail transportation network. It is the first law enacted in over ten years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation projects. In addition to funding, the bill reforms and strengthens transportation programs, refocuses on national priorities, provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments, streamlines project approval processes, and maintains a strong

commitment to safety.

Each state will receive a base apportionment and then will receive supplemental apportionments under the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) and Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). North Dakota can look forward to approximately \$64.5 in FY 2016, increasing to \$70.4M in FY 2020 from the STBGP program, while Minnesota's STBGP sub-allocation will be around \$162.5M in FY 2016, increasing to \$177.9M in FY 2020.

For a more detailed summary of some of the FAST Act provisions, please visit the U.S. Department of Transportation's website at [www.transportation.gov](http://www.transportation.gov).

## Great Rides Bike Share First Season a Great Success

Fargo's Great Ride Bike Share wrapped up its inaugural season this fall after a monumental first year. After compiling season statistics, Great Rides provided over 143,000 trips during the 2015 season. One bicycle recorded over 2,000 trips in 2015 and the busiest day of the year recorded an average of 20 rides per bike - a record among bike shares in the United States. "The excitement goes beyond our community as we gained attention nationally for setting the new U.S. record for most checkouts per bike per day," states Sara Watson Curry, Director of Operations for Great Rides.

Creating a local bike share program had been in discussion since 2011. After several years of discussion and planning, Great Rides was launched in March of 2015. The ability and ease of NDSU students to use the program, free for the first 30 minutes, was paramount in making the program a

success. Of the trips taken, over 136,000 were taken by NDSU students. Also the program currently has 8,103 NDSU student members. Of the remaining members, 114 are monthly/annual members and 1,756 guest passes were purchased.

The public can expect to see the bikes and docking stations deployed again in April 2016. The bikes and stations are transported indoors during the winter months for logistical reasons. The bikes will receive necessary maintenance and upgrades during the winter offseason. "Hibernating for the winter helps keep our riders safe and prolongs the life of our fleet," says Watson Curry.

The Great Rides Bike Share program consists of 101 bikes and 11 docking station located in downtown Fargo and on the NDSU campus. To find out more about the program people can visit Great Rides Bike Share website at [greatrides.bicycle.com](http://greatrides.bicycle.com).

## Southwest Metro Transportation Plan

The City of Fargo, City of Horace, and Cass County – in collaboration with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments and SRF Consulting Group – are wrapping up efforts on the Southwest Metro Transportation Plan. When complete, this long-range planning document will guide transportation improvement needs and land use in the area immediately south of 52nd Avenue S over the course of the next 25 years. In addition, this plan will allow Fargo and Horace to better preserve right of way, connectivity, and roadway frontages while planning for bicycle and pedestrian features and transit needs as development occurs in the area.

It is anticipated that an additional 65,500 residents will live in the southwest metropolitan area by 2040. The area is also predicted to be a major employment hub, providing nearly 12,700 jobs in the same time period. Based on these socioeconomic data indicators, as well as intensive analysis of roadway network requirements, the Southwest Metro Transportation Plan developed a best fit scenario for future transportation needs. This best fit scenario identifies both essential improvements to existing roadways and new corridor construction projects. Preliminary cost estimates were also developed for roadway projects to aid in the future planning of needed improvements.

A series of jurisdictional presentation meetings are being planned for January and February to gain final approval of the plan. A final public input meeting has been tentatively scheduled for January 26th from 5:30pm to 7:00pm at the Horace Community Senior Center.

A draft of the Southwest Metro Transportation Plan, including a preliminary engineering supplement for 76th Avenue S, is currently available for download on Metro COG's website.



### Public Input Opportunity

Meeting Information

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

Meeting 1 – NDSU Union

9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

Meeting 2 – Downtown Fargo

11:30 PM to 1:00 PM

Meeting 3 – West Acres Mall (Near Herbergers)

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Meeting 1 – Moorhead Public Library

9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

Meeting 2 – MSUM (Outside Bookstore)

11:30 PM to 1:00 PM

Meeting 3 – Moorhead Center Mall (Near Herbergers)

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

For More Information Call:

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## Fargo-Moorhead Transit Development Plan

Fargo-Moorhead Metro Council of Governments and MATBUS are preparing an update of the regional transit plan. The purpose of this study is to identify gaps in the current range of services, evaluate alternatives to address the gaps and prepare a prioritized list of system improvements.

The purpose of this second round of study public information meetings is to:

- Provide information on short and longer-term ideas for closing identified gaps and for improving service.
- Gather public comments and feedback on the ideas.
- Summarize the next steps of plan development.

A total of SIX meetings will be held over two days. Each meeting will be an informal open house where staff and the project consultant will be available to meet directly with interested residents.

## Bike Signage Study

Metro COG and its partner agencies have been studying the possibility of adding wayfinding signage along bicycle facilities in the Fargo Moorhead region. These wayfinding signs would direct bicycle and pedestrian users to public facilities such as parks, schools, and river crossings along identified routes utilizing existing bike/ped paths.

With the growing bicycle usage of people in this region for not only recreation purposes but for commuting purposes as well, these signs and their associated routes would direct system users to the most convenient routes to access a variety of destinations. This will be especially useful to pair with Great Rides, the local bike share system that was started in 2015.

A study review committee comprised of representatives from local jurisdictions has identified routes in which signs could be located. These routes are located throughout the region and often intersect with one another creating a network of routes that can be accessed from most places in the community. A great example of a route that has been developed, is the river front trail throughout downtown Fargo. This path facility has been expanded to include on-street and off-street paths from Riverwood Park in north Fargo to 88th Ave S in south Fargo.

Metro COG is currently preparing a memo recording the findings of the study review committee and will bring it through its adoption cycle in January 2016. The memo will be used as a recommendation to local jurisdictions for the implementation of wayfinding signage. However, it is up to the individual jurisdictions themselves to implement the signs along each route within their jurisdiction.

## Sheyenne Street Corridor Study

Metro COG in cooperation with KLJ, the City of West Fargo, and other local jurisdictions are actively working on completing the Sheyenne Street Corridor Study. The study is split into two parts – Sheyenne Street from 13th Avenue to 52nd Avenue and Sheyenne Street from Main Avenue to 13th Avenue.

The study portion from 13th Avenue to 52nd Avenue also includes studying a portion of 52nd Avenue from the Sheyenne Diversion to 4th Street E in West Fargo. The final draft report of the 13th Avenue to 52nd Avenue portion has been complete and the second public input meeting was held on December 17th. Some notable recommendations that have come from the study include widening Sheyenne Street from 13th Avenue to 19th Avenue from two lanes to five lanes (center left turn lane), widening Sheyenne Street to six lanes from 19th Avenue to 52nd Avenue.

The section from 13th Avenue to 19th Avenue could begin construction as soon as 2017 with 19th Avenue to 32nd Avenue occurring in 2018, 32nd Avenue to 40th Avenue occurring in 2019, and 40th Avenue to 52nd Avenue occurring thereafter. Some of the proposed six lane sections may be constructed as four lanes initially and later considered for six lanes as traffic warrants.

The study portion from Main Avenue to 13th Avenue is approximately half complete with a final completion expected in Spring 2016. Preliminary findings from this study indicate that major capacity improvements (widening) may not be necessary. Much of the study is looking at parking, aesthetics, safety, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

After the entire study is completed, the project will move into the environmental documentation phase where design alternatives will be selected and additional public involvement meetings will be held. To keep informed on upcoming Sheyenne Street public involvement opportunities, you can email Dan Farnsworth, Metro COG Transportation Planner, at [farnsworth@fmmetrocog.org](mailto:farnsworth@fmmetrocog.org).