

DEFINING & DIFFERENTIATING REGIONAL PLANNING VS MPO ROLES

MPO Summer Workshop

Thursday, October 1, 2020

History of Metro COG

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Formed in the late 1960s as a regional planning agency.

Tasked with addressing planning issues that are multi-jurisdictional in nature:

- Housing
- Mosquito control
- Low-head dams on the Red River & Riverfront use, planning, mgmt.
- Cemetery investigation and relocation
- Transportation

At that time, most coordination was between Fargo and Moorhead

Discuss the formation of the Metropolitan Council of Governments.

Mr. Oakey stated that on September 29, 1966 he wrote a letter to Mr. W. K. Michelson and copies were sent to the members of the Coordinating Committee. He also stated that he and Mr. Michelson went down to Chicago to investigate the possibility of obtaining Federal Aid on a Sewer and Water Project on West Main/^{Avenue} and they were advised that before any grant could be considered, a Metropolitan Council must be formed and anything we do has got to be a cooperative effort and this body must incorporate itself. Mr. Oakey stated that Barton-Aschman suggested a Metropolitan Council as a title for such an association and this will help us obtain these federal grants and he would propose that we set up a committee for the purpose of looking into this matter.

Mr. Wells stated that he attended a meeting in Chicago a short time ago and he realizes that the Federal Government is taking into consideration Metropolitan Planning. He suggested that this committee include members designated from each of the governing bodies.

Mr. Oakey stated that if we could have one Metropolitan Council doing all of these things it would be best to discharge our Metropolitan Committee.

Mayor Lashkowitz stated that he would like to think that this Coordinating Committee would be a continuing group.

MR. JACOB GUST MOVED THAT THE ORGANIZATION BE KNOWN AS THE FARGO-MOORHEAD-WEST FARGO-DILWORTH METROPOLITAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND PLANNING COMMISSIONS.

Mr. Vincent Anderson second the motion. On the vote being taken, all members present voted aye and the motion carried.

1966

1967

Taking on the MPO Role

Occurred in the 1970s when required by law.

Transportation Planning (5 cities, 2 counties)

- Land use
- Transit
- Bike and Pedestrian

Comprehensive Planning or other planning related assistance:

- Done with local funding (not CPG)
- Includes work for member jurisdictions and others in MPA

Metro COG Today

Eight staff (seven full time + one intern)

Member Jurisdictions:

Cities of Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, Dilworth and Horace
Cass County and Clay County

Serving an estimated 236,000 people in the MPA.

Associate Members within Metropolitan Planning Area:

In Minnesota

Barnesville

Glyndon

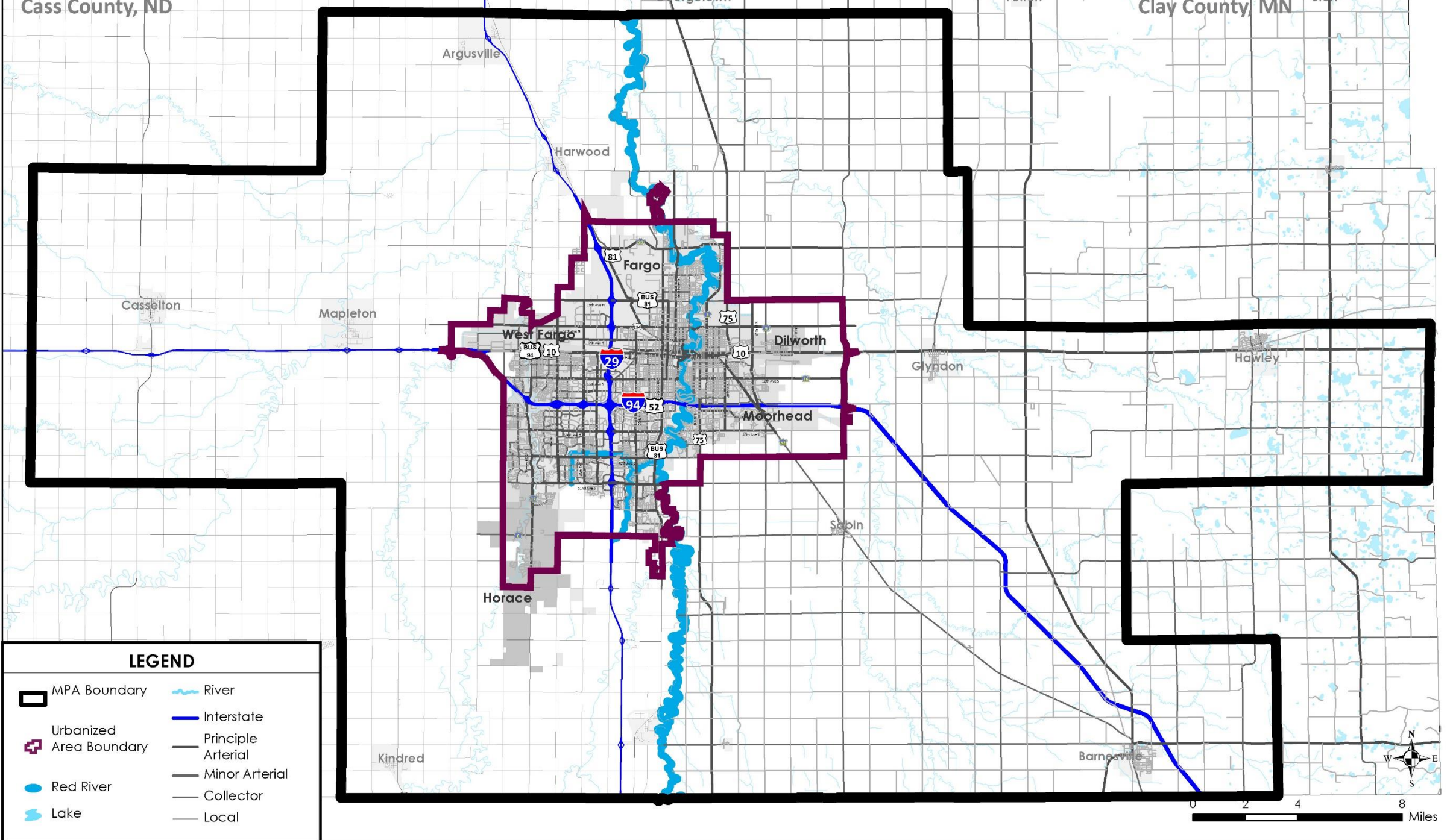
Hawley

In North Dakota

Casselton

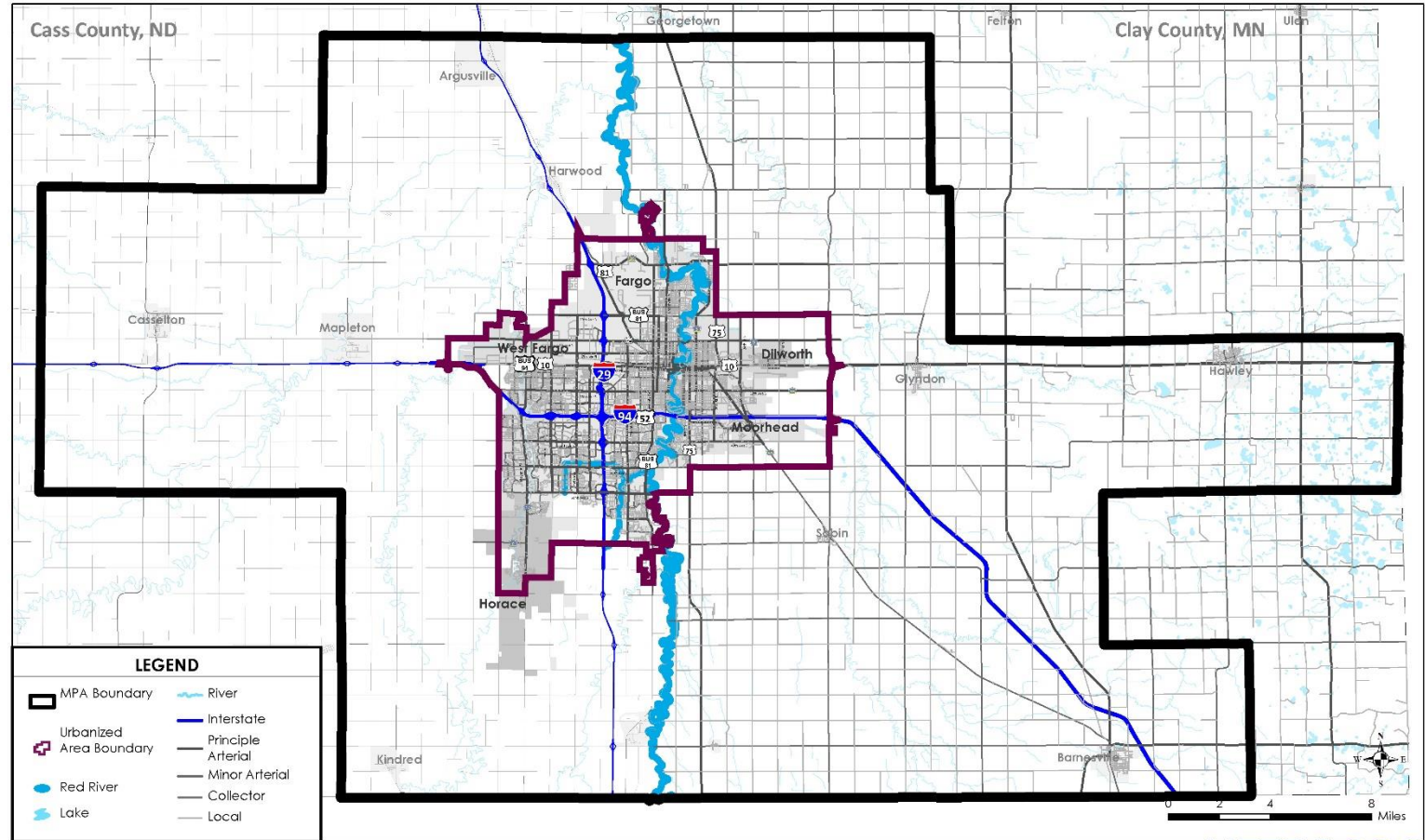
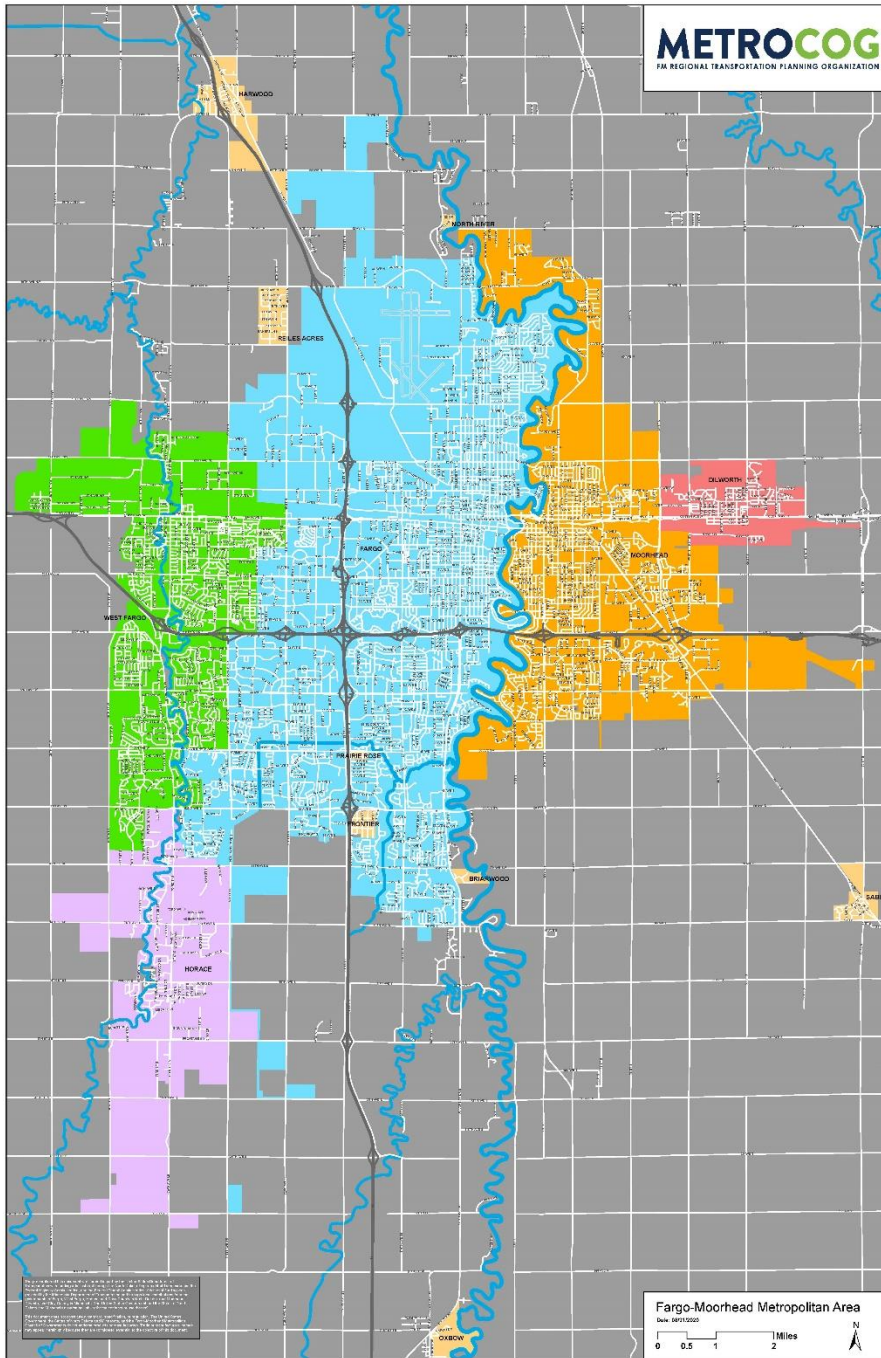
Harwood

Mapleton



LEGEND

- MPA Boundary
- Urbanized Area Boundary
- River
- Lake
- Interstate
- Principle Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local



Recommendations of Recent Studies

- ▶ Affect Metro COG organizational structure in that we would be taking on roles that are more relevant to the “COG” – the original role of the agency.
- ▶ These roles are being met with mixed reviews.
- ▶ Concerns about:
 - ▶ Paying for those roles
 - ▶ Difficulty envisioning the agency carrying out these roles
 - ▶ And perhaps...ensuring we don't water down the agency's MPO role
- ▶ MATBUS Transit Authority Study
 - ▶ Michael Maddox, AICP
- ▶ FM Diversion Recreational Plan
 - ▶ Adam Altenburg, AICP

MATBUS TRANSIT AUTHORITY STUDY

Metro COG 2018 Project

Current MATBUS Organizational/Governance Structure

- ▶ Municipal Departments
 - ▶ Separate staff
 - ▶ Third-party provider
 - ▶ Operate by Agreement as MATBUS
 - ▶ Cost allocation plan
 - ▶ Ownership agreements
 - ▶ Both designated recipients of FTA 5307 funds
- ▶ Governance
 - ▶ Municipal Departments reporting to City Administrator
 - ▶ MAT Coordinating Board
 - ▶ Formed under agreement
 - ▶ Recommendary body
 - ▶ Fargo City Commission/Moorhead City Council

Current Planning

- ▶ Metro COG Participation:
 - ▶ 2016 TDP
 - ▶ 2017 Facility Plan
 - ▶ 2020 Authority Study
 - ▶ 2021 TDP
 - ▶ ReMix Software

Why a Transit Authority Study?

- ▶ Existing organizational structure difficulties
- ▶ Building on previous work:
 - ▶ 1999 Transit Authority Study
 - ▶ 2016 Transit Development Plan
- ▶ MATBUS system growth
- ▶ Regional population growth
- ▶ Funding Implications following the 2020 Census



Goals & Objectives

- ▶ Existing systems we want to improve:
 - ▶ Communication among partner agencies, staff, and management
 - ▶ Decision-making process
 - ▶ Fairness – funding, representation, process
- ▶ Ability to address funding gap
- ▶ Identify key considerations for implementation of a new governance and funding models

2020 Census Implications



Recommended Governance Alternatives

1. Interim – MATBUS Director under Metro COG
2. Long-term – Transit Authority in North Dakota
3. Ultimate Goal – Bistate Transit Authority

Interim Recommendation: Metro COG Oversight

▶ Purpose

- ▶ Provide independence for the transit agency to solve regional issues
- ▶ Unify MATBUS visioning, long-term planning, and decision-making
- ▶ Improve communication and coordination
- ▶ Metro COG well-positioned
 - ▶ Already has bi-state, regional approach
 - ▶ Metro COG housed and operated the region's transit service in 1970's

Interim Recommendation: Metro COG Oversight

- ▶ Decision Making
 - ▶ New Transit Director position
 - ▶ Employee of Metro COG, report to Metro COG Executive Director and Metro COG Policy Board – primary venue for local government partner input
 - ▶ “CEO” for transit to oversee and coordinate decisions for internal MATBUS operations
 - ▶ Negotiator – with municipalities, community partners, etc
 - ▶ Single point of contact for management and operations approvals and proposals
 - ▶ Unified approach to capital and service planning
 - ▶ Mandate – to best service the region with transit, rather than jurisdictional view
 - ▶ Governed by Metro COG Policy Board
 - ▶ MAT Coordinating Board/TTC recommendary body

Long-term Recommendation: ND Authority

- ▶ New political subdivision, requiring ND enabling legislation
- ▶ Ability to levy taxes
- ▶ Geographical coverage: Fargo & West Fargo – with ability to grow
- ▶ Moorhead & Dilworth – purchase transportation under contract with the new authority

Long-term Recommendation: ND Authority

▶ Purpose

- ▶ Provide independence for the transit agency to solve regional issues
- ▶ Unify MATBUS visioning, long-term planning, and decision-making
- ▶ Improve communication and coordination
- ▶ Ability to leverage potential new funding sources

Long-term Recommendation: ND Authority

- ▶ Decision-making
 - ▶ Governed by new Transit Authority Board (appointed or elected)
 - ▶ Staffed by single Transit Director
 - ▶ Could still be attached to Metro COG as an arm of the organization

Recommended Financial Alternatives

1. Assumptions
2. Linkage to Governance Model
3. Evaluation

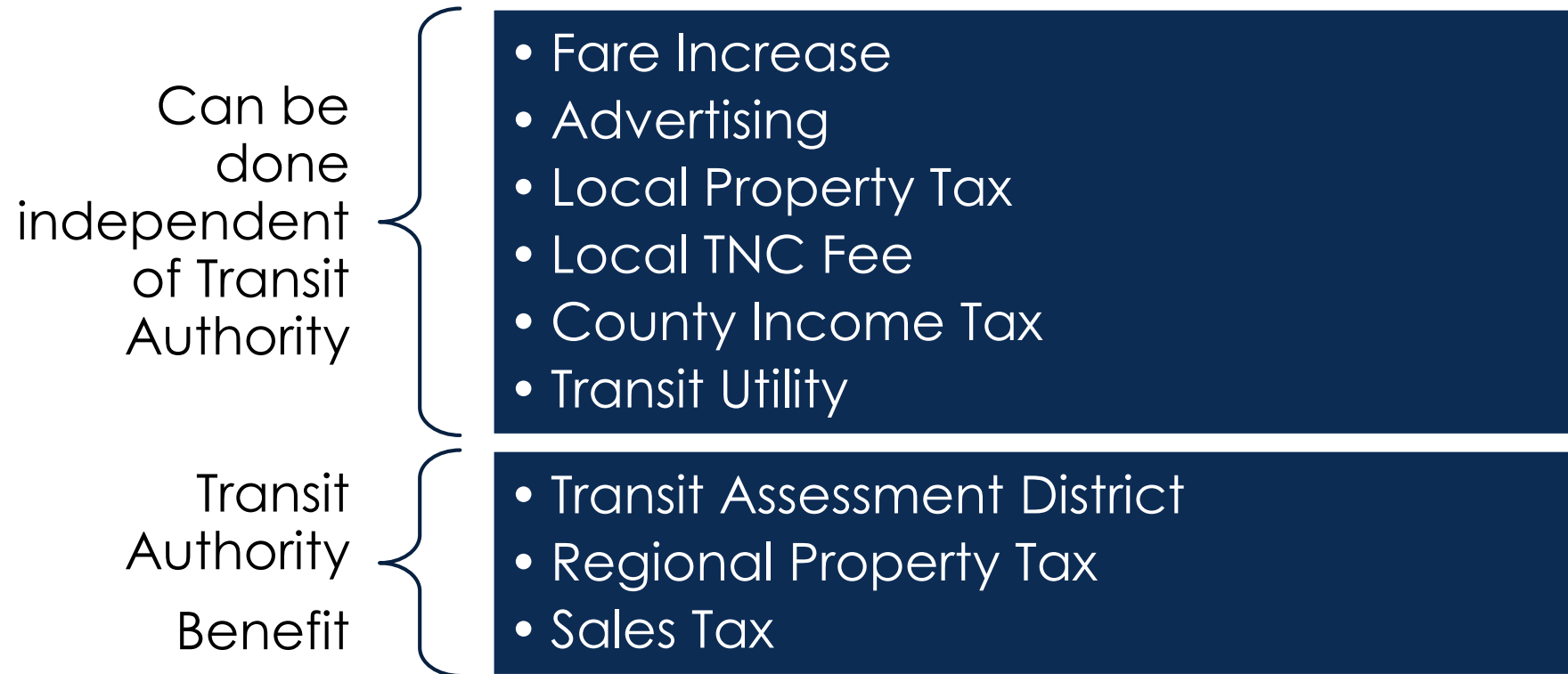
Financial Alternatives: Assumptions

- ▶ Cumulative impact of becoming a TMA yielding approximately a \$1.2 million operating funding gap assuming Fall 2019 levels of operations
- ▶ The largest portion of the funding gap consists of federal dollars designated for the North Dakota portion of the MATBUS service area
- ▶ Our understanding is that the State of Minnesota will likely continue its commitment to funding a similar share of operating expenses

Financial Alternatives: Assumptions

- ▶ Funding scenarios generally assume 21 percent increase in service by 2027 and a 43 percent increase in service by 2037.
 - ▶ A corresponding growth in operational funding would require an additional \$2.3 million to \$4.6 million annually, based on the 2018 MATBUS operating budget of \$10.8 million (Fargo and Moorhead combined).
 - ▶ Estimates established by 2018 Facility Study and ongoing TDP
- ▶ Capital funding changes result from two funding shifts:
 - ▶ FTA Section 5307 limits to operating dollars
 - ▶ Change in FTA 5339 funding tier
 - ▶ \$530,000 in federal dollars each year, requiring 20% match

Financial Alternatives: Linkage to Governance Model



Implementation

Governance

- Appointment of ND Transit Authority Board
- Board Representation
- Asset Ownership

Management and Operations

- Transit Director
- Agency Reorganization

Funding

- Local, near-term funding decisions
- Taxing Authority

Transition Process

- ▶ Who's involved?
 - ▶ Transit Director, Metro COG Policy Board, Metro COG staff, Local leadership in ND
- ▶ Drafting a transit authority strategic plan
 - ▶ Identify objective, consensus issues to be addressed and implemented
 - ▶ Revisit funding splits for shared capital purchases and state of good repair investments relative to decision responsibility and benefits
- ▶ Drafting operating agreements with partner jurisdictions

Tasks

- ▶ Drafting asset transfer agreements
 - ▶ From cities to the authority
 - ▶ Clauses on insurance and liability.
- ▶ Confirming the authority purchase Moorhead's share of ownership
 - ▶ Charge back the capital cost as an element of the new operating agreement
- ▶ Drafting an organizational structure and board composition.
 - ▶ Determine criteria for representation and qualifications: by jurisdiction, at-large, or funding share
 - ▶ Appointed or elected – ultimately, will be up to the legislature
 - ▶ Draft human resource, employment, compensation and benefits policies of transit authority staff

Tasks

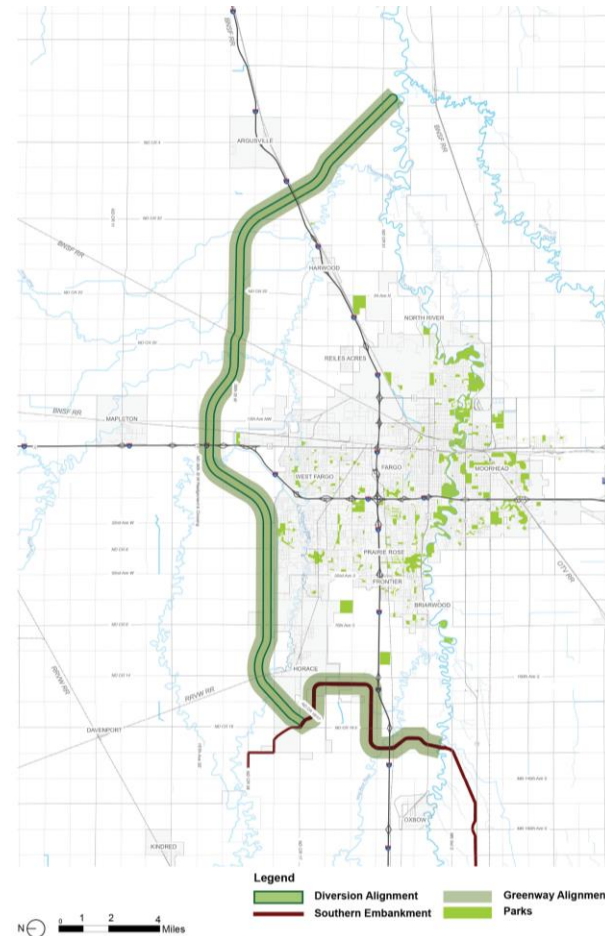
- ▶ Finalize preferred financial alternative implementation plan for revenue collection
- ▶ Draft backup policies in the event the North Dakota legislature is unwilling to pass enabling legislation
 - ▶ Metro COG will need to consider becoming the permanent owner and operator of MATBUS through an intergovernmental agreement.

FM GREENWAY RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Metro COG 2019 Project

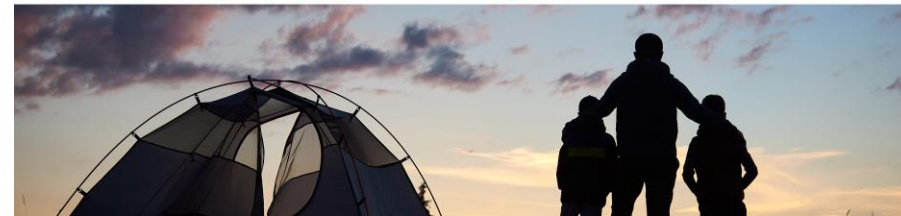
Project Introduction

- ▶ Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion
 - ▶ Flood protection
 - ▶ Split delivery
 - ▶ P3 Developer – Diversion Board of Authority
 - ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ▶ FM Greenway
 - ▶ Catalyst for recreation and economic development
 - ▶ 30+ mile corridor
 - ▶ North and south termini points at the Red River



Vision Statement

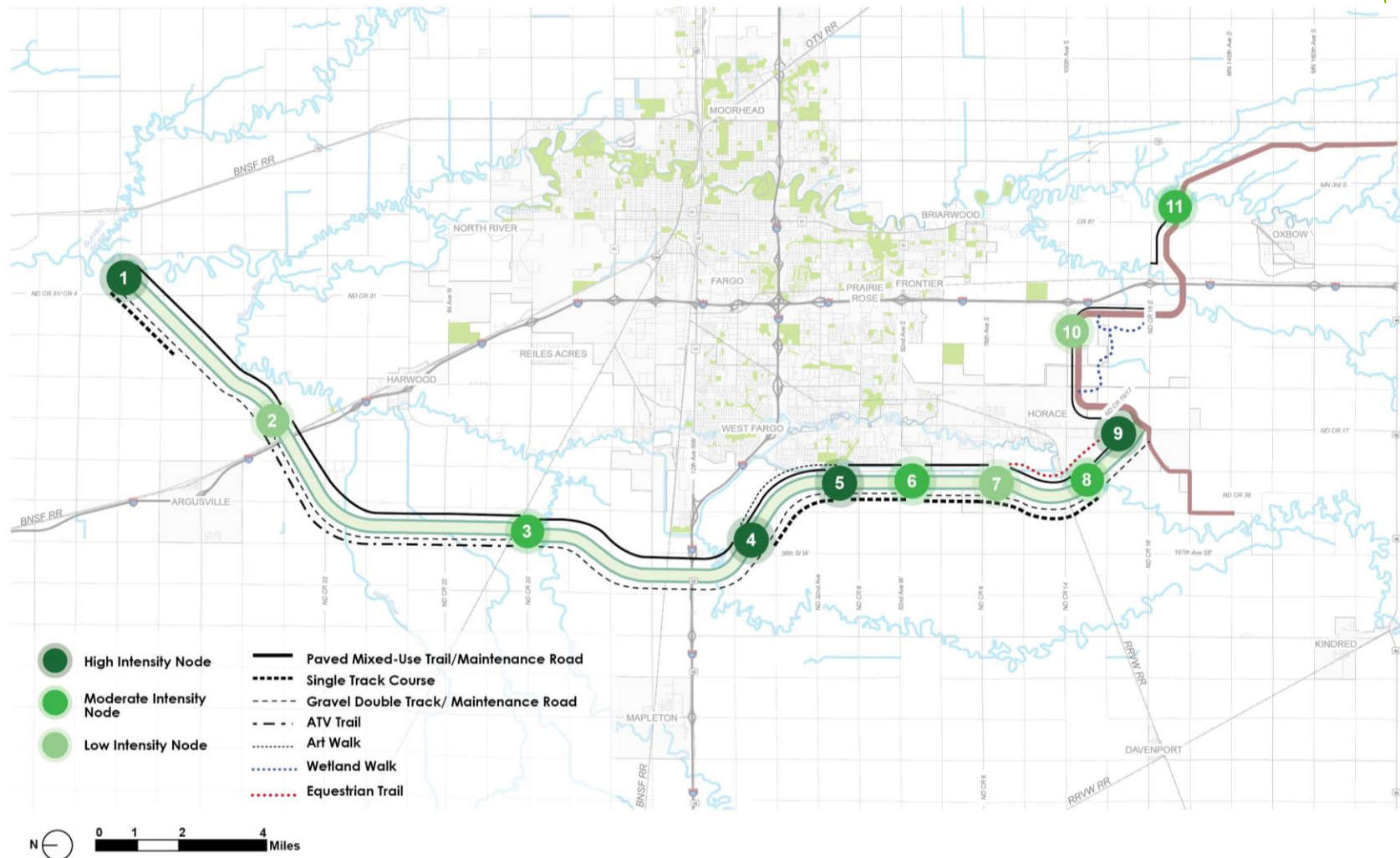
- ▶ The greenway will:
 - ▶ Host a wide range of recreation trials and activities
 - ▶ Reinforce the natural landscape and wildlife habitat
 - ▶ Generate regional economic benefits
 - ▶ Support the continued growth and prosperity of the Fargo-Moorhead area



Recreation Nodes



Trails Types



Benefits Case

Summary | The creation of the recreational component will generate significant value for the Fargo Moorhead region.

\$230M-\$239M

Total economic benefit, 20-year NPV

\$111M-\$120M

Increased property value, 20-year NPV

\$119M

Net new visitor spending, 20-year NPV

Increased health savings, business attractiveness and competitiveness, and new residential development



Need for a Greenway Governance Structure

- ▶ Leverage existing capacity of current recreation, cultural and educational institutions
- ▶ Produce high quality operations and programming
- ▶ Support FM Greenway brand development
- ▶ Assist with securing diverse funding streams
- ▶ Ensure accountability to the public

Potential Roles of Lead Greenway Governing Entity

- ▶ *Serve as the primary point of contact with the P3 developer and the USACE as they design and construct their respective components of the diversion*
- ▶ *Serve as the primary point of contact with the P3 developer and the USACE as they operate and maintain their respective components of the diversion*
- ▶ *Provide initial vision and ongoing stewardship*
- ▶ *Market the recreational component*
- ▶ *Engage with the local community*
- ▶ *Promote philanthropic fundraising and sponsorship for capital and operational needs*
- ▶ *Manage programming for specific nodes and in-between nodes*
- ▶ *Contract for routine operations and maintenance for specific greenway recreation features not maintained by other entities*

Short-Term Implementation (2020-2026)

- ▶ Establish a Governing Entity
 - ▶ Metro COG should make a determination regarding the feasibility of taking on the lead governing entity role
- ▶ Secure Recreation Partnership Agreements
 - ▶ Secure and document partnership agreements to begin designs for recreation features once diversion has been constructed
- ▶ Establish Consortium of Potential Partner Park Districts
 - ▶ A consortium of area park districts should be established to jointly develop equitable approaches for revenue generation and recreation funding

Examples of How MPOs are Involved in Recreation Planning

- ▶ Met Council – Minneapolis-St. Paul
 - ▶ 56 regional parks; 400 miles of trails; eight special recreation features (Como Park Zoo, Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, Gale Woods Farm)
- ▶ Metro – Portland, OR
 - ▶ 14 regional parks; 90 miles of river and stream bank restoration; additional services (Oregon Zoo, Oregon Convention Center)
- ▶ Corridor MPO – Cedar Rapids, IA
 - ▶ Master Trail Plan Committee
- ▶ Center Region Council of Governments – State College, PA
 - ▶ Two regional parks; two community pools; nature center; softball complex
- ▶ Cheyenne MPO – Cheyenne, WY
 - ▶ Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Initial Reactions to Recommendations

- ▶ Desire by some technical staff/Policy Board members to designate entire recreation corridor a state park
 - ▶ North Dakota Parks and Recreation has expressed interest in being a partner to develop a node but does not have the resources/staff to operate the entire facility
- ▶ What are the costs?
 - ▶ The draft plan states that Metro COG analyze taking on the role of lead governing entity but does not provide additional information or guidance on what that might look like
- ▶ Reluctance to expand “traditional” role of Metro COG
 - ▶ Coordination vs. “regionalization” of planning functions

Final Thoughts or Questions?

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