

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE  
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Friday, October 15, 2004 – 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dick Grassel, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

On a call of roll the following members were present: Doug Christensen, Warren Strandell, Rob Kweit, and Curt Kreun (Proxy for Dorette Kerian).

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Ryan Brooks, GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior; Lane Magnuson, GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior; Roger Foster, GF Public Transit Supervisor; Dan Jonasson, GF City Traffic Engineer; and Mark Engel, GF/EGF MPO Intern.

Guests present: Mary Weaver, Transit Rider.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Dick Grassel, Chairman, declared that a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Kweit, seconded by Strandell, to approve the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, minutes of the GF/EGF MPO Executive Policy Board, as read. Motion carried unanimously.*

**MATTER OF PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF ALTERNATIVE MODES PLAN**

A. Transit Plan Update

Haugen reported that we are adding an additional three years to our current 2027 Street and Highway Plan, so now all of our twenty-year horizon plans need to be updated to reflect that change. He added that it is his hope that this body will concur with the MPO's recommendations and grant approval to the Alternative Transportation Modes Plan to 2030, and to extend the Street and Highway Plan from the 2027 to 2030.

Haugen stated that he would now be giving a brief power point presentation on the Transit Plan Update (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request).

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He pointed out that he also distributed copies of comments that were received from the open house that was held last Thursday, as well as responses to those comments. He added that they would be incorporating these into the presentation as well.

Presentation ensued.

Haugen went over the recommended route changes, including those to the night route service, which would entail servicing the area of 32<sup>nd</sup>/36<sup>th</sup> Avenues South, as well as the area across Interstate 29. He added that in addition to these changes, they are also recommending simplifying the route names by using colors instead of numbers.

Haugen commented that these are all short-term recommendations, so we need to remember that as we grow as a metro area, we will need to look at extending services, and as we think about expanding our fixed route system, we will also need to consider the funds that will be necessary to operate it.

**B. Bike/Pedestrian Plan Update**

Magnuson reported that copies of the staff report, and the power point presentation were included in the packets, however he added that it may be better to follow along with the power point presentation on the screen, as it will be given in somewhat of a different order than the copy in the packets.

Presentation ensued.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Grassel asked if there were any questions or comments. He added that this is a lot of information in a short period of time, but we do need to give preliminary approval today.

Mary Weaver reported that information she submitted in the past was included in the packets, however, she has some additional information she received from the drivers that she would like to submit today. She then distributed copies of this information to the board, and explained that she was asked to present this to the MPO Executive Policy Board.

Weaver commented that has been discussion about where the ideas came from to make changes to the bus routes, and the phrase that has been used quite a bit is, “the majority of the drivers”, but, while that majority may have been greater in number, the attached document is from a group of drivers whose majority, in combined years of service, driving City buses, is much greater, and they asked that this document, and their voices of experience represent them in their opposition to the proposed changes. She pointed out that that the document states: “We, the undersigned, are present and (one) former Grand Forks City Bus drivers. We attended the meetings at which the presently proposed route

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changes were discussed, and though it has been stated that “the majority” of drivers were in favor of those changes, we hereby state that we did not the, nor do we now, support the changes, and are signed by several drivers. She stated that she also has copies of a statement from Blair Sondrol, driver, which, if you would imagine a 6-foot 1-inch tall person, with a beard and a deep voice, she would like to read.

Christensen asked how many drivers the City employees. Foster responded that the City employees thirty-two employees, of which twenty-five are full-time drivers. Christensen asked how many routes there are currently. Foster responded that there are eleven routes, however we only have six buses running those routes. Christensen stated, then, that at any given time there would be six drivers operating our buses. Foster responded that this would be correct, and this is done through a split-shift system. Christensen stated, again, that there are six buses moving throughout the community, and there are six drivers operating those buses, so do those buses run for an eight-hour period. Foster responded that they run for a twelve-hour period. Christensen asked, if he were to try to explain this to his neighbor, would it be correct to say that we have six buses that operate throughout the day, with one driver operating each bus for eight hours, and another for four hours, using a split-shift system. Foster responded that this would be correct. Christensen asked if this also includes our Senior Bus system. Foster responded that it does not.

Christensen asked how many Senior Buses we have running. Foster responded that we have two running during the day. Christensen asked if those buses also run for twelve hours, or less. Foster responded that one runs for eight hours and the other for six hours. Christensen stated, then, that, including our Senior Bus system, we have eight drivers operating buses at any given time. Foster responded that this would be correct.

Foster stated that he would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Haugen, and staff, for doing some really good work. He added that, as the manager of this whole system, as you can well imagine, he gets a little sensitive about any changes, but he thinks that what they have proposed this time around, and this transportation plan is clear and precise, but they want to make sure, though, in regard to any changes to their routes, is that those changes don't affect any of those better producing routes. He said that Route 5-7 is clearly one of their best producing routes, so he would be very cautious in changing that route just to meet the change we need to make on Route 8-9 as presented, and he thinks that they can go back to the maps and probably find a way to make the rest of the changes without affecting Route 5-7, but, having said that, again they will go back and look at these routes because this is not a done deal, and once this is approved each one of these suggestions will be looked at again, very closely, and what concerns him the most of any of them, of course, is the Senior Rider to Dial-A-Ride suggestion, which will need to be looked at very closely, because he isn't sure that the \$70,000 savings that is being projected is accurate.

Foster stated that he would also like to publicly thank Mary Weaver for her continuous work in regards to public transit, as she has been a advocate for public transit for a long time, and we appreciate her comments.

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Christensen commented that it appears that if we pass this we are just going to invite a lot of controversy, because we just heard from the guy that runs the bus service that he doesn't embrace some of these changes, so he would like to know if we need to pass this now or can we wait until some of the issues have been worked out. Grassel reminded everyone that we are only giving preliminary approval, that things can still be worked out before final approval is given. Haugen commented that, while he doesn't want to speak for Mr. Foster, but he thinks staff is in favor of bringing this plan forward, and when implementation comes through, we further study how it can be implemented, and if we find at that time that something can't be done, then it won't be done. Christensen asked if this was correct. Foster responded that it was correct, that he supports moving forward with this process.

Christensen asked what areas need to be addressed, once this gets to the City of Grand Forks. Foster responded that he would think that the details of each change should be looked at, for instance the Senior Rider to Dial-A-Ride should be looked at as he feels that there is a lot to be considered on how that is done, such as whether or not it should be on a hourly basis, etc.. Christensen asked about the route changes, and whether or not they should be looked at as well. Foster responded that the route changes have not actually been run yet, so we don't know if they will, in-fact, work, but, again, we need to move the process forward, and then look at these more carefully. He added that he doesn't feel that route changes need to go before the City Council at all, only in the case where a change is detrimental to passengers along that route should it have to come to the City Council.

Kreun commented that he doesn't think there is anything wrong with the concept of the plan, just that there are some details that need to be worked out, and he would agree that this needs to be moved forward.

***Moved by Kweit, seconded by Kreun, to grant preliminary approval of the 2030 Alternative Modes Plan, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.***

C. Extend Street/Highway Section to 2030

Haugen reported that this is just to tie up our twenty-year horizon to the same end-point. He explained that the Street and Highway Section currently only encompasses that time period to the Year 2025, and we would like it to extend that to the Year 2030.

***Moved by Kweit, seconded by Strandell, to approve extending the Street and Highway Section to the Year 2030. Motion carried unanimously.***

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON EXTENSION OF TEA-21**

Haugen explained that TEA-21 is the Federal Transportation Act that authorizes transportation programs and projects to be in-serviced in the United States, however,

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TEA-21 expired a year ago. He added that, although there have been several attempts to reauthorize it, all attempts have failed, and we are currently under two extensions of TEA-21, with the first being an eight-month extension of the authority, which basically means that until May there is an authority in place for transportation programs and projects to operate in the United States; and the second is an extension of funding, which ensures funding until November 20<sup>th</sup>, at which time Congress will reconvene, a Lame-Duck Congress, after the election to address what will be done after November 20<sup>th</sup>, however, this Congress probably will not reauthorize the Transportation Bill, which means that when the new Congress comes into place, the current bills that are in conference cannot carry over, new bills will need to be introduced, which will then create the need for other changes as well, including leadership, revenue projections, etc..

Information only.

**MATTER OF PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRESENTATION**

Magnuson reported that the MPO, in conjunction with both the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Engineering Departments, had been in working on developing a new Pavement Management System, and, now that this system has been completed, both Cities will be able to monitor pavement conditions and provide a strategic approach to network maintenance.

Magnuson then explained how the rating system is used, and commented that the average Pavement Condition (PCI) rating for Grand Forks is 86, and 82 for East Grand Forks, which is extremely high for most communities.

Magnuson stated that the next step is to have City Staff review these ratings and adjust them accordingly to reflect any changes and road projects that have since taken place.

Magnuson reported that different variables are built in to the pavement management software which allows us to monitor the deterioration of a pavement, and automatically adjusts the PCI rating, which allows us to identify areas of the City where roadway maintenance funds would be most efficiently used.

Christensen asked if this program is available to the City's Engineering Departments. Magnuson responded that it was, that this was the entire premise behind doing this, that the MPO would acquire the software, get the information inputted and up-to-date, and then turn it over to each City's Engineering Department to maintain. He added that the key to this program is maintenance. Christensen asked if this was something that the MPO could continue to do for the Cities, or is that something that the MPO wants to get off their plate, and onto the City's plates. Magnuson responded that, from his point of view, the PCI ratings are kind of onerous, and because he isn't an engineer, it would be better for an engineer to determine what the PCI ratings mean to each City. Christensen asked what the cost of keeping the software updated will be. Magnuson responded that

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the maintenance agreement will run about \$2,000 a year. Haugen added that we are maintaining the software license, and are currently retaining the assistance of consultants to ensure that both Cities have all the pertinent information input into the program in order for them to budget for, and maintain their transportation systems.

Information only.

**MATTER OF SOLICITATION OF T.I.P. PROJECTS**

Haugen reported that he included a reminder, in the packets, that the MPO is moving forward with it's T.I.P. process. He added that we are requesting submittal of projects according to the timeline, which he also included in the packet.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. November Executive Policy Board Meeting

Haugen commented that we need to have another Executive Policy Board meeting on November 12, 2004, at 12:00 Noon.

2. Open House for 42<sup>nd</sup> Street

Haugen commented that he sent an e-mail announcing an Open House for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Grade Separation at the Alerus on October 26<sup>th</sup>, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Haugen gave a brief summarization on the history of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Grade Separation project.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***Moved by Kweit, seconded by Christensen, to adjourn the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004, meeting of the GF/EGF MPO Executive Policy Board. Motion carried unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Ryan Brooks  
GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior