

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

**Friday, March 18, 2005 – 12:00 Noon  
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A102**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Doug Christensen called the March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:18 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Chairman Doug Christensen; Dick Grassel; Punky Beauchamp (Proxy for Gary Sanders); Warren Strandell, Steve Gander; Gary Malm; Rob Kweit; and Dorette Kerian.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Ryan Brooks, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; Lane Magnuson, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Dennis Potter, GF City Planner; Dan Jonasson, GF City Traffic Engineer; and Allen Grasser, GF City Engineer.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Chairman Christensen declared a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Kerian, seconded by Malm, to approve the January 14, 2005, minutes of the GF/EGF MPO Executive Policy Board, as submitted.*

*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

**MATTER OF CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR GRAND FORKS EXTRA-TERRITORIAL LAND USE STUDY**

Magnuson distributed copies of updated information pertaining to the Grand Forks Extra-Territorial Land Use Study, and went over it briefly.

Magnuson reported that the purpose of this study is to determine where future growth corridors for the City of Grand Forks should be located. He added that the study also incorporates the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Corridor Study, as well as focusing on the Gateway Drive Corridor. He stated that the

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consultant will directly work with the Gateway Drive Task Force, as far as the development of design criteria and guidelines. He pointed out that the budget designated for this entire study is \$130,000, and they did receive \$5,000 from the Gateway Drive Task Force for the consultants, so they can meet directly with them and get their input.

Magnuson commented that the Selection Committee met on Wednesday and Thursday to conduct interviews with the four finalists, who included SRF Consulting Group, Camarios, Dahlgren/Shardlow/Uban, Inc., and Ulteig Engineers. He stated that the Selection Committee rated the proposals based on: 1) procedures and overall approach to the project; 2) experience of the firm in comparable type projects; 3) innovative technology/techniques used to accomplish tasks; and 4) cost of services to be performed. He said that the unanimous recommendation, to this body, from the Selection Committee, is to hire SRF Consulting at a cost not to exceed \$95,000 for the entire study.

Kerian asked for a brief overview on how the Selection Committee arrived at their recommendation. Magnuson responded that it was basically SRF's overall approach. He said that both Dr. Kweit and Mr. Malm were on the Selection Committee, and may have comments on this as well, but from staff's perspective, prior to their even submitting their proposal, SRF representatives came up and met with us in order to get a good understanding of what the needs of the community were, and he, personally, felt they incorporated that very well into their proposal, and showed a willingness to understand what we really needed. He said that they were ranked first throughout the entire selection process.

Kweit commented that he wasn't able to be at the interviews, but considering the paper record, of the four firms selected, SRF was clearly superior to the other firms, in terms of their presentation, their experience, their understanding of what we were looking for. Malm added that during the interview process they really showed that they knew, by far, what the City was looking for, and the other firms just weren't as prepared, and hadn't done their homework.

Kerian said that she had heard the word "innovative", so she was wondering if there were some particular things that the committee felt SRF addressed of that nature. Magnuson responded that in their proposal, some of their graphics, and their use of GIS, offered a very good visual aspect of what their design ideas are for the corridors.

Gander asked about the recent discussion that was held regarding the use of cost as a selection criteria, and whether or not it was relevant to this selection, or is this something different. Haugen responded that this project, as well as the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study, which will be discussed next on the agenda, were approved prior to that discussion, therefore, cost can still be used in the selection process for both. He added that cost was the final selection criteria, and nobody viewed any of the cost estimates until after the interviews were held.

Christensen asked if any of the other firms partnered up with any of our local firms. Haugen responded that Camarios did partner up with SEH and EAPC, and another firm that was not interviewed did partner up with WFW.

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Christensen stated that he is curious about the qualifications of Advanced Engineering and Barnell Services on this project. Haugen responded that their strength is two-fold: 1) they have good knowledge of the City's GIS system, they have all that material, they have resources ready, and they have the expertise to do analysis using GIS; and 2) they have good knowledge of water issues, and a familiarity with wastewater and flood protection.

Christensen asked if SRF had been questioned as to whether or not they are involved in any other consulting projects. Haugen responded that they are not aware of any other projects SRF may be involved with, however, they did not ask them specifically. Malm commented that SRF said that they are just coming to Grand Forks, that they have recently opened an office in Fargo, but hadn't done any work up here as of yet. Christensen stated that someone had contacted him regarding the sighting of a casino in Grand Forks, and made reference to a Minneapolis Firm that assisted, or was involved in these conversations, and he didn't know if it was this firm or not. Haugen responded that DSU was the firm that has been in communication with the Useldinger family. He added, however, that they did ask DSU about that, and they responded that they were not under contract with Useldinger on the Casino sight, but that they did have conversations on the issue.

***Moved by Kweit, seconded by Kerian, to approve awarding the 2035 Extra-territorial Land Use Study contract to SRF Consulting Group, not to exceed \$95,000.***

*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.*

**MATTER OF CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR 42<sup>ND</sup> STREET TRAFFIC  
MANAGEMENT STUDY**

Haugen reported that back in January this body approved the scope-of-work for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study, so staff sent out the RFP, and we received five responses. He said that the five-member Selection Committee narrowed the submittals down to three firms, who were interviewed on Thursday. He stated that going into the interview process, SRF was once again in the lead, and after the interview process, and the opening of the cost proposals, they are the recommended choice to do this study, at a cost of not to exceed \$58,000.

Haugen commented that, as part of the motion, an amendment to the budget needs to be approved as well. He said that originally, when this study was programmed back in August or September of last year, an outfit out of NDSU, known as ATAC, was going to assist us with it. He explained that ATAC is the same firm that worked on the Washington Street Traffic Signal Coordination Study, and that one of the benefits of working with them was that they received some federal money that could be used to match our federal money, thus lowering the cost estimate for this study. He stated, however, that ATAC has since had to back out, thus creating the need to hire a consultant to do the study, which, of course increased the cost of doing the study. He said that in the end, as he highlighted on the information in the packet, he is suggesting that we shift some money from what was identified as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Corridor Study to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study, as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Corridor Study is being

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incorporated into the 2035 Extraterritorial Land Use Study, therefore the money is no longer needed for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Corridor Study.

Kerian asked what the term “mostly” means. Haugen responded that he used the word “mostly” because, when they put the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Corridor Study back into the plan last fall, they really didn’t know what was going to be studied, and they think they are covering it now with the Extra-territorial Study, but he wanted to leave some room in the event that something should come up that we didn’t know about yet.

***Moved by Kerian, seconded by Kweit, to approve awarding the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study Contract to SRF Consulting, for an amount not to exceed \$58,000, and to amend the 2005-2006 Annual Work Program to transfer funds from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Corridor Study project to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study.***

Grassel asked if this is just approving doing the study on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Traffic Management Study. Haugen responded that this is correct. Grassel stated, then, that we won’t know the cost of implementing the plan until after the study is done, correct. Haugen responded that that is correct, that we are just covering the cost of the study at this time. He added that the study will look at alternatives to try to improve traffic management, both during the construction of the hotel/entertainment complex, and after it is completed and operational, as well. He stated that they will prepare an interim and final plan, and will look at alternatives that might include construction costs, as well as including information on intelligent information systems, variable message signs, lane captures, radio broadcasts, and rather than expanding streets, other ways to capture capacity on the roadway system, so this will fund the study, and identify whatever future costs we may have to put in the ground, or into intelligent transportation systems.

Christensen asked what will be studied first. Haugen responded that the three primary tasks are: 1) to get a handle on what the impact the hotel/entertainment complex will have on-site, to the Alerus Center to help identify what parking will be available; 2) to review a prior event management plan, developed prior to the Alerus opening that was based on assumptions, to determine a better understanding of how traffic is flowing in, and around when events occur; and 3) to use traffic modeling software to test the alternatives in virtual time, virtual reality, to give us a better idea of what will or won’t work before we start trying to implement those alternatives.

*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.*

**MATTER OF DRAFT RFP FOR EAST GRAND FORKS GATEWAY DRIVE ACCESS  
MANAGEMENT STUDY**

Brooks reported that the State of Minnesota recently adopted access management policy guidelines, which are somewhat different than what we were operating under previously. He stated that they have been trying to get them to agree to some additional access points off of Highway 2, so what we have proposed to do, in the Work Program, is to hire a consultant to take a look at the corridor, and determine how these new policy may affect our request.

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Brooks stated that they have put together an RFP to hire a consultant that will come in and work with MNDOT and the City of East Grand Forks to determine the best utilization of that roadway on some parcels we have vacant, as well as some existing access locations that should be looked at. He said that the bulk of the study will involve working with the City of East Grand Forks and the State of Minnesota in order to come up with an Access Management Plan, and possibly recommending some overlay ordinances.

Brooks commented that the RFP requests that proposals be submitted by April 21<sup>st</sup>, and it is hoped that we can have someone on track by the beginning of May. He pointed out that they had included cost as a selection criteria, however, it has been removed per the Technical Advisory Committee's recommendation.

Christensen asked how much has been budgeted for this study. Haugen responded that they have budgeted \$65,000 for the study.

Christensen asked what the need is for this study. Haugen responded that in East Grand Forks, that portion of Gateway Drive that is included in the Long Range Transportation Plan, calls for to additional access points, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N.E., and a study is needed in order for those access points to be formally approved by MNDOT as being positive for construction. Gander added that East Grand Forks' business community is interested in these additional access points in order to provide greater accessibility, while still providing orderly passage along Highway 2. He stated that MNDOT has been much more restrictive in East Grand Forks, it seems, than they have been in other communities, although it may be that some of these other communities have been grand-fathered in, and were all in place prior to the current regulations, but if you compare access to Highway 2 as it goes through Crookston, and Highway 2 as it travels through East Grand Forks, there is no comparison, and, frankly, we need more access points as it is very important to the East Grand Forks Business Districts.

Beauchamp asked if, with these new regulations, MNDOT is going to be somewhat "kinder" to East Grand Forks. Brooks responded that it is hoped that they will be more agreeable to our requests. He added that in conversations he has had with representatives from MNDOT, it appears there may be a good possibility that we may get the access points we are requesting, as well as future accesses too, and he thinks the time is right now for these requests as they have the guidelines in place, and they have put together some ordinance possibilities for cities to adopt as well, so we can take a look at those to determine if they would work well for us.

***Moved by Gander, seconded by Grassel, to approve the Access Management Plan RFP for distribution.***

*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.*

**MATTER OF ADDITIONAL T.I.P. PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

Haugen reported that they normally wouldn't be processing T.I.P. items at this time, as they should have already been acted on, however, as with many things there are some exceptions to

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the rule. He stated that there are two projects that have been applied for, which this body needs to act on. He reminded everyone that, as with all T.I.P. projects, this body needs to consider whether or not they conform with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and also which priority ranking they merit.

Haugen pointed out that the first item involves a project that the City of Grand Forks applied for for funding to make connections in the Lincoln Drive area. He said that, as noted in the staff report, back in 1996 the City installed a bike trail behind what was then the dike, after the flood protection project was completed, that trail now needs to be reconnected to the street system. He commented that the application is for the national Trails Program, which is somewhat different than the regular Transportation Enhancement Program, however, it still needs to go through the T.I.P./S.T.I.P. process as it is highway trust dollars. He reported that this has been through the City Council for action, and staff and the Technical Advisory Committee both recommend that this project does conform to the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and that it should be given a high priority ranking.

Haugen stated that the second project involves an application for State Transportation Enhancement Program monies, from the NDDOT-District Office. He explained that the State of North Dakota basically has four segments of their Transportation Enhancement Program, and the one we are most familiar with is the Urban Program, then there is the County Program, another that gives monies to the Park and State Historical Society for tourism programs, and half of the money the State receives for this they keep for their projects, which is what we are applying for. He stated that on Gateway Drive, NDDOT, from 55<sup>th</sup> Street out to the Air Force Base, in 2006 will be doing an overlay project, and late last year the Gateway Drive Task Force came up with an idea for an entrance feature, however at that time it was not supported for an Transportation Enhancement application through the City, but there has been subsequent talk about using beautification monies to do this. He said that the District Engineer knew about this entrance feature, and saw this as an opportunity to use his project to get it done, so he submitted the application to the central office. He pointed out that this means, then, that the MPO now needs to say that it conforms to our MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, and that we give it a high priority ranking. He added that there is still an issue, however, with local match. He explained that this is a \$150,000 estimated project, which, using the normal split of 80/20, would require a local match of \$30,000. He said, however, that initially the District Engineer felt that because this was his request, and it is on the State Primary System, the 20% would be the State's responsibility, but the Central Office is now indicating that in the past they had a similar situation occur, and they placed the responsibility of the 20% on the City, so there is still the issue of who will pay the 20% match for the project. He added that in talking with Urban Development, they indicated that because of the discussion that has taken place about this entrance feature through the beautification program, they don't feel that it would be difficult to raise the \$30,000 at a local level if needed.

***Moved by Kerian, seconded by Kweit, to approve the two additional T.I.P. project applications as being consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan, and to give them high priority rankings.***

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*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.*

Haugen commented that he neglected to mention that the first project, the Lincoln Drive project, is actually a 2005 application, so if it is awarded, the MPO will have to amend their T.I.P..

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Extension of 13<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. in East Grand Forks

Grassel asked if the 13<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. extension project had been re-applied for, and whether or not it has been awarded. Haugen responded that it had. He explained that in the reauthorization of TEA-21, there was a request from the House for earmarked, high-priority projects, and last year East Grand Forks did get, from Representative Peterson \$1.2 million dollars earmarked as high priority, which was adopted by the House, and was sent to the Conference Committee with the Senate, however they could not agree on a total dollar amount, so last year there was no agreement reached on the reauthorization, but they are trying to do so again this year, and the House did pass it's version of the new reauthorization, and the \$1.2 million is in that version, so Representative Peterson was able to maintain that \$1.2 million for the 13<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. extension project, so it has gone through the House Chamber, but the Senate is just starting it's reauthorization process, and, traditionally, the Senate, in their Chamber, do not earmark projects, but wait until things go to the Conference Committee to do so. He stated, however, that having the \$1.2 million going into the Conference Committee, it is assured that East Grand Forks will get some dollars, and, according to Representative Peterson's office, the \$1.2 million sounds pretty sure.

Haugen reported that the Senate held it's first hearing on the reauthorization on Wednesday, and they have until May to get something out, and approved by the President. Beauchamp mentioned that the President has threatened a veto, correct. Haugen responded that in the House they have a thing called the "Re-Opener Clause", and one of the big sticking points is the issue of donor/donee, as there are States that send more gas taxes then they receive back, and they are trying to get a 95% return on their gas money, while they currently get 90%. He stated that the House passed their version of this, which gets these States up to 92% of the amount the President said he would allow, but in order to keep everyone happy they put in this "Re-Opener Clause", which, a year or two from now would allow them to reopen that funding issue, which, in a nutshell, is the House trying to get more revenue so they can have more highway dollars to spend, but the President is trying to hold it to a specific dollar amount, and that doesn't allow a 95% return to the donor States, so there is a potential for a Presidential veto to occur.

Gander gave a brief description of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. extension for everyone's information, explaining that they are basically wanting to clean this street up, taking it straight to Bygland Road right by the Elementary School.

Haugen commented that at our January 2005 meeting, this board authorized the resubmittal of this project, as well as the 48<sup>th</sup> Street Project in Grand Forks. He stated that, if you will recall, in

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discussing this, it was thought that, in North Dakota, all funds would go towards a bridge between Bismarck and Mandan, which has happened in the House, with them approving an earmark of \$30,000,000 for that project, which, of course means that Grand Forks' 48<sup>th</sup> Street Project was not identified as a high priority project in the House.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***Moved by Kweit, seconded by Malm, to adjourn the March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board at 1:12 p.m.***

*Voting Aye: Malm, Beauchamp, Grassel, Kweit, Strandell, Gander, Kerian, and Christensen.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Executive Assistant