

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Friday, December 15th, 2006 – 12:00 Noon
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Doug Christensen called the December 15th, 2006, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:10 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Chairman Doug Christensen, Punky Beauchamp, Dick Grassel, Steve Gander, Gary Malm, Rob Kweit, and Warren Strandell.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Nancy Ellis, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; David Hampsten, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; Marissa Champion, GF/EGF MPO Intern; Derek Scott, GF/EGF MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: John Thompson, GF City Traffic Engineer.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Christensen declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 9TH, 2006, MINUTES

MOVED BY GANDER, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 9TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE 2007-2008 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Haugen reported that the MPO is seeking approval of it's 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program. He explained that copies of the funding tables were distributed at the November meeting.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

Haugen referred to copies of the document, included in the packets, and went over it briefly. He explained that now that both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks City Council's have reviewed our work activity requests, and approved them, we did include those activities in the program.

Haugen stated that we will be completing the update to the Street and Highway element of the Transportation Plan in 2007, and the Bridge Closure Incident Management Plan, which we just started, will also be completed in 2007 as well.

Haugen commented that some of the project requests we received, which have been programmed, include a couple of items related to the School Crossing Study. He stated that we have many different traffic control devices, but do not have one standard way to address school crossings in the metro-area, so we were asked to address this issue, and develop a more uniform way to address these crossings in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. He said that the timing of this request is good as the new SAFETEA-LU bill includes a separate funding source called "Safe Routes To School" that we can apply for.

Haugen stated that another project is related to one of the T.I.P. requests we will be acting on later in the meeting, and that is to work with Grand Forks on the "Split 8/9" study, which involves determining what type of transit service we want to provide to the South 42nd Street Corridor and the Industrial Park areas.

Haugen reported that the last item we are doing for Grand Forks is per a request from the City to look at it's Collector/Collector intersections to determine whether or not there may be a better way to control traffic at those intersections.

Haugen commented that that is basically what is being funded in 2007, with the remaining funds being split up for continuing projects such as updating the T.I.P., G.I.S. System, etc.. He explained that we need to have things in place by July 2007, so, as mentioned at previous meetings, we have more funds available for work activities in 2008, so you will see more items listed as specific studies that we will be doing, including: Columbia Road Corridor Study; 47th Interchange Justification Report; MN/4th Avenue Corridor; Arterial Signalization Optimization Study; and Update Downtown Plans for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks to include the Grand Forks Downtown Parking Study, the Grand Forks Land Use Plan, and other documents that address various downtown issues.

Haugen referred to the funding tables, and went over them briefly. He pointed out that in 2007 we have just over 675,000 in funds, and 630,000 in funds in 2008.

Haugen reported that this program has been reviewed by both MNDOT and NDDOT, and FHWA, and approved by the Technical Advisory Committee, so staff is now requesting approval from the Executive Policy Board as well.

MOVED BY KWEIT, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE 2007-2008 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AS SUBMITTED.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

Gander commented that we did lose our pedestrian link on the Point Bridge, weak though it was, and he was curious as to whether or not any thought has been given to some kind of replacement link. Haugen responded that he was not aware of any discussion on this issue. Gander said that he doesn't know where that might fall, in terms of a study, but it would be awfully nice to pursue that at some time. Haugen responded that we will be revisiting the 2008 activities in the fall of 2007, at which time we may find that a project or two that has been programmed will not be done, or may be postponed, or that our funding estimate has been changed to the positive, and this may be something we can add at that time.

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

Voting Nay: None.

**MATTER OF PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE
ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODE PLAN – TRANSIT SECTION OF THE
2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Haugen commented that, as everyone is aware, we have had to make some changes to our transit program to make our metro area compliant with SAFETEA-LU, and to make it eligible for some funding programs. He stated that because of this, we are seeking preliminary approval today in order to be able to present these changes to both City Council's for adoption into their respective Comprehensive Plans.

Haugen reported that the first change brings us into the discussion of Job Access Reverse Commute and the New Freedom Programs. He explained that these are new programs into which Congress has placed the bulk of the increase in federal funds available to enhance or improve transit services. He stated that the first thing we had to do was to develop a Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. He said that Ms. Chaney worked with Human Service Agencies, and Public Transportation, to develop such a document for our area, and that document as already been approved by the MPO, so we now have to bring that plan into the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan so that when asked whether or not these federal funds are consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan, it will already be amended in.

Haugen stated that the next change involves an increase in funding in our regular 5307 Program, and on the North Dakota side we also saw a significant increase in State Aid for transit. He explained that when we first wrote the Transit Development Plan a couple of years ago, the State assistance to Grand Forks was set at \$50,000 a year, and right now it is set at \$250,000 a year, and we need to reflect that change in our financial tables.

Haugen commented that this request has already been approved by both Planning Commissions, and the Technical Advisory Committee, and, assuming this body gives preliminary approval today, the formal public hearings will be held in January, for final approval by this body at their January meeting.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

MOVED BY BEAUCHAMP, SECONDED BY MALM, TO GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODE PLAN – TRANSIT SECTION OF THE 2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

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

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE REVISED SCHEDULE FOR T.I.P. PROJECT SUBMITTALS, AND TO APPROVE THE JARC/NEW FREEDOM PROJECTS AND NDDOT-GRAND FORKS DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND GIVE PRIORITY RANKING

Haugen reported that normally at our December meeting we would have a thick packet, and be busy discussing and prioritizing the North Dakota projects for federal funds on the street side, but we did receive a request from the City of Grand Forks to delay that for one month. He stated that North Dakota DOT did concur with that request, so to really formalize everything we have a Public Participation Plan in which we state when we hear this project, so we need to revise the T.I.P. schedule to show a January discussion date instead of a December discussion date.

Haugen commented that, although these T.I.P. projects have been delayed a month, there are still some programs we need to act on at this time. He stated that the first one is a Transportation Enhancement Project that the NDDOT's District Office submitted. He referred to a map of the area being discussed, and explained that they are applying for federal funds to remove and replace trees along the I-29 corridor. He stated that the total project cost is \$120,000, with a 90/10 split, and the state picking up the 10%. He added that the other part of this discussion was to do this from Gateway Drive north to Washington Street Interchange as well. He said that as part of both proposals they will work with the Park District and Conservation District to plant trees in the right-of-ways on either side of Gateway Drive and DeMers Avenue, but that is not part of the actual T.E. application.

Haugen said that second project that we need to forward on involves the JARC/New Freedom Programs. He explained that Grand Forks is applying for funding from these programs to serve the South 42nd Street and Industrial Park areas, to possibly offer an earlier Saturday service, and to add a Sunday service as well.

Haugen summarized, stating that there are three items we need to approve: 1) Revision of the T.I.P. schedule; 2) T.E. project on I-29; and 3) Three transit applications.

Christensen commented that he thought we just approved a study for transit services, and now you want to approve this. Haugen responded that we are applying for the funds so that whatever we study, and whatever recommendation we come up with, we will know the dollar amounts we have available to implement the alternatives we recommend. Christensen stated that Grand Forks is not totally sold on adding these services on this side of the river. Haugen responded that

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

that may be true, but you also decided you want to apply for the funds, and this is what sends it to the actual decision makers so we know whether or not we are going to receive any of those funds. He added that once we get their answer back we will know how much funding we have available to determine what type of service we want to add. He added that the applications were premised on adding a full fixed route to the 8/9 area, so if we get the full amount we would have the ability, should that be our decision, to run a bus out there, but if we don't get the full amount requested, then we would know that if we still want to do the full fixed route it will require more local dollars be include in the equation, which may not bring this up to the recommended alternative, which would mean we might need to look at other ways to provide service there. Christensen asked when the decision would be made. Haugen responded that the decision should be made in January, and the study should be completed in March. Christensen stated that Mr. Bakken and himself asked for funding estimates for this service, and he was wondering where this was at, and who was providing it. Haugen responded that staff is working on this, along with Roger Foster, and should be presenting it as we go through the process of how we are going to provide service there.

MOVED BY KWEIT, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO APPROVE THE REVISED SCHEDULE FOR T.I.P. PROJECT SUBMITTALS, AND TO APPROVE THE JARC/NEW FREEDOM PROJECTS AND NDDOT-GRAND FORKS DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND GIVE PRIORITY RANKING..

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF STREET AND HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE

Haugen reported that he would be giving a brief presentation on where we are at with the Street and Highway Plan update. He explained that the consultant was here this week, and met with both City Planning Commissions to present this information to them, and get feedback, and met with the Technical Advisory Committee as well. He referred to the packet, and pointed out that it included a couple of key items: 1) Revised Goals, Objectives, and Standards, primarily based on SAFETEA-LU requirements; 2) Level of Service Analysis for the 2006 P.M. Peak Hours; and 3) Analysis of Safety Issues.

He commented that there were a couple of responses received that were not included on the map, and may not have been discussed adequately at the Planning Commission meetings. He stated that one of the things, besides the turning radius on the DeMers ramps, a lot of trucking firms mentioned that the acceleration lane for the DeMers on ramp, northbound, is too short for trucks. He said that, although we don't have accident data to confirm this, they are saying there are too many near misses. He pointed out that the newer ramp on Gateway Drive has a much longer acceleration lane for the trucks, so they are asking for consideration of this ramp having a longer acceleration lane as well. He added that the other issue that is not mapped well is the concern of getting on Bygland Road, particularly during the A.M. Peak Hour.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

Haugen referred to the Level of Service map, included in the packet, and explained that this is a diagram that reflects our 2002 conditions versus our 2006 conditions. He stated that, for the most part, things have remained fairly consistent. He pointed out that our two failing intersections in 2002 were the DeMers/Washington and 17th/Columbia Road intersections, with the better of the two being the DeMers/Washington intersections. He added, however, that in 2006 we show that the 17th/Columbia Road intersection is now the better of the two.

Haugen commented that some of the things the Technical Advisory Committee noticed, which surprised them, was that the level of service on Columbia/32nd Avenue is still at a Level of Service C, and between 2002 and 2006 we did a massive improvement to this intersection so you would anticipate an improvement in the level of service, but what happened is that we switched what used to be capacity constraints there, with timing constraints, which is due to the longer wait for turning movements.

Haugen referred to the Crash Assessment Summary map, explaining that they used three years of crash data from both Minnesota and North Dakota to compile the summary, and went over the information briefly.

Haugen stated that in order to forecast our future traffic, we have to forecast where growth is going. He said that, whereas a land use map would tell us that an area is going to have residential growth, the map included in the packet indicates how many housing units we expect to actually be in a residential area in 2035. He referred to that map, and went over the areas in which Grand Forks is expected to grow.

Haugen reported that as far as employment is concerned, they are showing growth along the 32nd Avenue Corridor, along Washington Street, and the Industrial Park area in Grand Forks.

Haugen stated that for East Grand Forks, residential growth is shown in both the northern and southern edges of the City, and employment growth is shown in the Industrial Park expansion area, and the Central Avenue/Gateway Drive Corridor.

Haugen reported that the next step is to begin running the 2035 Street Network to identify where we have issues that we want to address with alternatives. He stated that in January the timeline is to take the future socio-economic data issues and develop alternatives to deal with those issues.

Haugen commented that all of the information given today is available on the MPO's Website for review.

Malm suggested that we may want to look at the growth rate we are using. He said that, although you are using a 1.2% growth rate, if you listen to some people, if you don't take the maximum number you won't develop the street infrastructure to 5th, if you project too low you will end up with what we have today, and it won't be able to handle the increases. He stated that some of those streets need to be looked at much farther, and much bigger than you ever planned

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

for. He referred to South 32nd, and commented that you will find the biggest mess in the world, with nothing lining up, and no room to expand those streets. Haugen responded that a lot of this is still premised on the thought that every 20-years you go back and reconstruct a street, and our streets have improved pavement types, and are lasting 30 and 40 years, with major structures like overpasses and bridges lasting 50-plus years, so if you are a little high in your population figures, it allows you to have that additional capacity built in to your projects. Malm said that he thinks we are too low on your capacity, as he truly believes that what you are running into today is that they weren't projected to the right level to handle the service. He referred to the Point Bridge as a classic example of this. Gander commented that if you had nice wide easements, of course, you could come back with wider pavement surfaces, but the trouble is, if you start with a neighborhood street, and the neighborhood is paying for the streets, and it now becomes a collector, on the North Dakota side do you have such a thing as a State-Aid street, whereby they would come in and provide the funding necessary to improve it, so that it is no longer a local cost, which, to him, is why you need to be careful that you don't overbuild, and charge that local property owner big bucks either. Malm responded, however, that what ends up happening is that you aren't prepared for the growth, and you can't do anything with it once it's built because you don't have any room to do it, so we need to plan ahead for growth.

Beauchamp asked where we factor in the "Destination City" stuff. He stated that he looks at the Point area, and we know through our bridge studies how much traffic the Point Bridge handles, and it is a pretty significant number, and now you have to sit and wait for five, seven, or more minutes just to get onto Bygland in the morning, and that isn't going to get any better because you only have one way in and one way out, how do we factor in the destination stuff. Haugen commented that he knows that there are probably some intersections that could be improved along there, if we could get a traffic signal at Rhinehart and 13th, that would help create more gaps. Christensen asked why that isn't done. Haugen responded that we have to meet warrants first, and the volume isn't quite there yet.

Christensen asked what a traffic signal costs. Haugen responded that they cost around \$200,000. Christensen stated that Grand Forks has a couple of traffic signals they could sell East Grand Forks. He asked if it would be possible remove a couple of signals in the Grand Forks Downtown area, and sell them to East Grand Forks. Haugen responded that we would have to do a study to prove that they should be removed, but that staff would look into this further.

Information only.

MATTER OF APPROVAL TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACT WITH NDDOT

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF HOLIDAY BONUS HOURS

Haugen reported that every two years we need to renew our contract with NDDOT in order to have access to federal funds. He stated that there were no changes made to the agreement, so he is asking for authorization, as the Executive Director, to execute the contract.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Friday, December 15th, 2006**

Haugen stated that, because we follow most of the Grand Forks personnel policies, and Grand Forks approved four holiday bonus hours to their employees, we are asking that the Executive Policy Board approve the same for it's employees. He added that this is something that has been done for several years now.

***MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE
AUTHORIZATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACT WITH
NDDOT AND HOLIDAY BONUS HOURS.***

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

Voting Nay: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Change In Chairmanship For 2007-2008

Haugen reported that this is Mr. Christensen's last meeting of his two-year commitment as the Chairman of the Executive Policy Board. He thanked him for his leadership over the last two years. He then explained that Dr. Gander will assume the Chairmanship for the next two years, and will now determine where the board will meet. Gander stated that he would like to hold the meetings in the East Grand Forks Council Chambers, and continue to have them on Fridays at noon. He asked that copies of the 2007 meeting schedule be re-distributed to the board.

Haugen commented that the next meeting of the Executive Policy Board will be on January 12th, at 12:00 Noon in the East Grand Forks Council Chambers.

Christensen stated that he feels we have a very good staff, that they are doing a great job, and he hopes that continues. He added that he really would like to see the stop light issue studied.

Haugen said that with Dr. Gander moving up to the Chairman position there is a vacancy, which according to our by-laws should be filled by a North Dakota board member, so at our January meeting we need to determine who should fill that position.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY KWEIT, SECONDED BY MALM, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 15TH,
2006, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:50 P.M..***

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

Voting Nay: None.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant