

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Wednesday, February 15, 2006 – 12:00 Noon
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A102**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Doug Christensen called the February 15th, 2006, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:04 p.m..

CALL OF ROLL

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

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

Guests present were: Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Brad Gengler, Interm Grand Forks City Planner; and Wayne Lembke, Grand Forks City Engineer.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Christensen declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY KWEIT, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 18TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Grassel, Strandel, Beauchamp, Kvasager, Gander, Kerian, Kweit, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO FY06 T.I.P. ANNUAL ELEMENT

Haugen commented that the 47th Avenue Project, for Grand Forks, is currently programmed in the MPO's T.I.P., and the State of North Dakota's S.T.I.P. documents as including that section of roadway from Cherry Street to Washington, but the City of Grand Forks has now determined that the project should extend from Belmont Road to Washington. He stated that the City has also been working with the State of North Dakota, and have been able to obtain some additional

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federal funding, therefore, in order for the MPO to fulfill their request to amend this project, we need to amend our 2006 Annual Element of our T.I.P.. He said that a public hearing was held at the Technical Advisory Committee at their meeting last Wednesday, and nobody appeared to object, so both the Committee, and staff recommend that the Executive Policy Board approve the amendment to the 2006 T.I.P., and submit a request to the State of North Dakota that they do the same to their S.T.I.P.. He added that another minor change, which involves a decrease in the federal funding for the 47th Avenue South project, is also included with this amendment as well.

MOVED BY GANDER, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE THE FY2006 T.I.P. AMENDMENT, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Grassel, Strandel, Beauchamp, Kvasager, Gander, Kerian, Kweit, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF PRELIMINARY ND FY07-FY10 T.I.P. PROJECTS

Haugen referred to the packet, and explained that the Technical Advisory Committee did discuss the preliminary 2007-2010 funding, and that, as you will recall, at the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting we did forward on, to the Central Office, both the District's and the City's request for Street and Highway projects.

Haugen pointed out that a copy of the Preliminary Draft of the 2007-2010 Urban Program was included in the packets, and shows what projects could, and couldn't be funded. He stated that there is good news and bad news, with the good news being that during the project development process for the Columbia Road/24th Avenue South intersection project it was discovered that there would be a considerable increase in the cost of the project. He commented that there is currently a staff agreement that NDDOT will provide an additional \$900,000 in funding, so if the City of Grand Forks determines they want to go through with a bigger project, City staff will be presenting a proposal to their City Council, which would also mean that the MPO would need to amend their 2006 T.I.P. to reflect this change as well, even though the funds won't be available until 2007. He explained that this means, then, that even though this project is expanding in size and costs, there seems to be some additional funds available to cover the costs. He said that the bad news is that we had submitted a request for the Washington Street Underpass, and that project is currently not being programmed in 2010, and may, in-fact, not be programmed until 2015 or later.

Haugen stated that staff is still waiting for official word on our Transportation Enhancement request, for a bikepath along 17th Avenue South, from Washington to 20th Street in Grand Forks. He explained that the State has made their decision on Transportation Enhancement projects, but have not yet released the official announcement.

Haugen said that this was an information only item, and that a more complete list of projects and funding available for the 2007 to 2010 fiscal years. He added that a public hearing will be held in April, at which time we will formally adopt the Draft 2007-2010 T.I.P., and then in approve a final document in July or August.

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Grassel asked why the Columbia/24th Avenue intersection was not done when the improvements were made to Columbia and 32nd Avenue. Kerian responded that there wasn't enough funding available.

Kerian asked what the significant increases were for the Columbia/24th Avenue Intersection project. Lembke responded that they included increased construction costs, increased engineering costs, etc..

MATTER OF FINAL APPROVAL OF THE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR U.S. HIGHWAY #2 (GATEWAY DRIVE) IN EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA.

Brooks stated that he would briefly go over some of the changes that have occurred with the plan since the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting.

Brooks explained that one of the biggest changes is illustrated in the colored photo that was included in the packets, specifically the improvement shown for a full-access at 5th Avenue N.W.. He stated that, as you will recall, MNDOT estimated the cost of this alternative at about \$3,000,000, however, after our sub-consultant went over everything, and made some improvements, they were able to refine the cost estimate to \$987,000, which is a much more doable amount for us. He added that this figure, however, does not include right-of-way costs, which is something MNDOT asked that we included in the plan. He pointed out that they aren't going to connect the right-of-way to the north, and will actually bulb the frontage roads.

Brooks commented that the other improvements, and they did talk about these a little at the last meeting, include the offset of the ¾ access at 2nd Avenue N.E.; a future light at 11th Avenue N.E., which, once done would involve closing a portion of the access at 7th Avenue N.E., possibly having a ¾ access there, or a right-in/right-out access; and a future full-access where the industrial site sub-station access is located.

Brooks reported that there are three items that MNDOT asked be included in the final plan, they are: 1) include the words "and future" on page 51, second paragraph, second sentence between current and performance; 2) include a sentence that the Right-of-Way costs are not included in the cost estimate for Alternative 1; and 3) change Figure 5.1 (Alternative 1).

Gander asked what the eastern extent is of this study, is it 11th Avenue N.E.. Brooks responded that it actually goes all the way out to the Industrial Park Substation.

Gander stated, then, that we will be going from a 2-B, which is apparently a very restrictive zone for any access points, to a Category 7, which at least has an access approval process available. Brooks responded that that is correct. He added that once this plan is completed, anytime we talk about future access we will need to look at this plan, as will MNDOT.

Christensen asked when East Grand Forks will get the funding to implement this plan. Brooks responded that a lot of it will be developer driven, including help with getting the funds necessary, but the 5th Avenue N.W. access is being looked at being done soon. He explained that

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the City of East Grand Forks receives a sub-target amount from the ATP-MNDOT process, and that is \$710,000 of federal monies, so, using the refined cost estimate, we would be within range of being able to fund it in 2010, and right now that is what East Grand Forks is looking at doing with those funds, however that could certainly change. He added that these are the two items that are on the horizon, and everything else is considerably in the future.

MOVED BY GANDER, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO GRANT FINAL APPROVAL OF THE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR U.S. HIGHWAY #2 (GATEWAY DRIVE) IN EAST GRAND FORKS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: 1) INCLUDE THE WORDS "AND FUTURE" ON PAGE 51, SECOND PARAGRAPH, SECOND SENTENCE BETWEEN CURRENT AND PERFORMANCE; 2) INCLUDE A SENTENCE THAT THE RIGHT-OF-WAY COSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST ESTIMATE FOR ALTERNATIVE #1; AND 3) CHANGE FIGURE 5.1 (ALTERNATIVE 1) WHICH IS INCLUDED.

Voting Aye: Grassel, Strandel, Beauchamp, Kvasager, Gander, Kerian, Kweit, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO FY06 ANNUAL UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM

Haugen reported that the MPO is seeking approval to amend their 2006 Annual Unified Work Program. He explained that they have met with staff from both sides of the river, and have included in the amendment their priority work projects they would like added to the current 2006 work activity. He added that no 2006 projects have been delayed or removed, and are just adding projects to the list.

Haugen explained that the reason we were seeking additional projects is because, as a result of SAFETEA-LU we are receiving an additional \$200,000 or so of funding from 2005. He stated that a portion of those funds are being used in-house so that we can meet SAFETEA-LU requirements, and the remaining funds are to be used for additional projects requested by both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

Haugen reported that the biggest changes involve the Street and Highway Update. He explained that one added project involves a Central Spine Concept Study for East Grand Forks, for the north/south connection and grade separation over by Sacred Heart School. He stated that another project involves Columbia Road in Grand Forks, for which our current plan calls for 6-lanes for Columbia, from DeMers to 32nd. He explained that it currently states that, if through our travel forecast we still conclude that six lanes are necessary, we will exercise an option with the consultant to do a more refined look at right-of-way constraints we have along Columbia Road to determine if it is a feasible project, so it is an option to the scope, not an assumption that we will six-lane Columbia.

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Haugen stated that another thing they have done for both cities is to increase the scope-of-work on the transit shelter study. He explained that originally they were going to look at one specific site to determine what could be done to enhance it, but they are now looking at additional sites. He said that one of the outcomes of SAFETEA-LU is federal funds for capital, and this is a way for us to try to build on our ridership, and perhaps help some private developments get some increased lobby or waiting areas for transit riders. Christensen asked where the study sites were located. Haugen responded that they were at: 1) Altru; 2) Grand Cities Mall; 3) Columbia Mall; 4) UND Memorial Union; 5) EGF Downtown; and 6) EGF Technical College. Christensen asked how much money has been set aside for this study. Haugen responded that they allocated \$30,000 for the consultant to help us look at those sites. He added that they are also going to look at Canad Inn's proposal for a transit lobby area to get some distance between that being a private developer, and FTA dollars helping to pay for some of the shelter amenities being proposed there.

Christensen commented that it has been brought to the Grand Forks City Council's attention that a parking study for the downtown is needed. He asked if it was included in the list of additional projects. Haugen responded that it was not. Christensen asked how they would go about getting it added to the list. Haugen responded that in working with Urban Development, they aren't sure exactly what the 2006 funding will be at this time, and are actually working with 2005 funding amounts, but he expects there will be an increase in funds. He added that they should know shortly what our final 2006 funding will be, and, because he believes there will be additional funds available to do that study, MPO staff will come before this body in April with a request to amend the work plan to do the parking study.

Christensen asked what was felt the cost would be to do this parking study. Haugen responded that a similar study done in 1998 cost \$35,000, so he would feel this study would cost about the same. He added that the focus won't be so much on trying to identify the flood recovery efforts, and how to get parking, but instead would be to identify what parking we have, and how to better manage it. Christensen asked if we could fund this study now, and then when we get our additional funds do the bus shelter study, as this study is a little more urgent. Haugen responded that we could switch the two projects around if desired.

Kerian asked, although we do feel there are some issues with Columbia Road, particularly near the overpass, it isn't felt that it needs to be a six lane roadway, but how, and when do we deal with the issues at hand. Haugen responded that we first need to determine for sure whether or not six lanes are needed, and then if it is determined that it can remain a four lane roadway then it would go through the City's regular programmed project development process. Christensen commented that all indications are that it will need to be five lanes, with turn lanes, because six lanes will be too expensive. Kerian asked how this all fits in with the MPO's plan. Haugen responded that we need to come up with other projects because currently, the reason we are showing this as being a six-lane roadway is because the traffic volumes are over capacity, so if we can come up with alternatives that reduce the attraction of Columbia Road, if we can provide a relief corridor to take the pressure off of Columbia Road, then four lanes, or five lanes with the center turn lanes included, could remain in place, and that is what we need to identify first. Christensen commented that because we live here we kind of know where are alternatives are, and we could study that, but what would be staff's suggestion, knowing what your corridors are,

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which are none. Haugen responded that one of the reasons we were looking at six-lanes for Columbia Road, is because, as an MPO, we decided that we weren't going to put an interchange at 47th Avenue South. He explained that at one time an interchange at 47th Avenue South was included in the MPO's plan, and if that had been done, there wouldn't have been a need for Columbia Road to have six-lanes, but because we aren't ready to put additional interchanges on the Interstate, we then had to address the problems with Columbia Road, and putting six-lanes in on Columbia Road became one alternative. He added that one other issue was that when we first looked at putting six-lanes in on Columbia Road, 42nd Street was under construction, and we now have evidence of what that new roadway is providing for us for traffic volumes as a traffic corridor. He stated that our modeling effort may be better able to predict that corridor's relationship to Columbia Road. Gander commented that he was thinking about 42nd Street, particularly that as you go south, toward Menard's, traffic thins out, and slows down, and the connection to 32nd Avenue is pretty weak, so if we could enhance that particular area, it may make it more appealing to traveler's going north and south as well. Haugen responded that we do currently have an alternative recommended in the plan to improve that area. Gander stated that that is good as it would certainly be cheaper than doing anything to Columbia in the short-term.

Kerian asked, on the Incident Management Plan, did staff work with Emergency Management staff. Haugen responded that he did meet with Jim Campbell, Emergency Management Manager, a couple of times already, and will continue to do so.

MOVED BY KERIAN, SECONDED BY KWEIT, TO APPROVE THE AMENDED 2006 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM SUBJECT TO THE REMOVAL OF PROJECT 300.23, TRANSIT SHELTER STUDY; AND REPLACING IT WITH A NEW PROJECT 300.23, GRAND FORKS CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PARKING STUDY. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **SET MARCH MEETING**

Haugen stated that the Executive Policy Board will need to meet in March to act on a T.I.P. amendment. He reported that the Technical Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 8th, so anytime after that date would work best.

After some discussion, it was determined that a meeting date of Friday, March 10th, be set.

2. **LAND USE PLAN UPDATE**

Christensen asked how the Land Use Plan Update was coming along. Haugen responded that it was coming along well. Christensen asked if they would be getting recommendations soon. Haugen responded that recommendations have been forthcoming all along. He went on to explain that the big issue of whether to go with a two-mile or four-mile extraterritorial boundary

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has been determined, with the choice being to go with the four-mile; tiers one, two, and three's boundaries have been determined; additional information is needed on the fourth runway at the airport to determine how it impacts the area around it; and the concepts for the pilot sites have all been distributed out for review. Christensen stated that what he is curious about is, assuming the City Council passes the resolution to extend out four-miles, how everything is handled within the four-mile, then, is a whole new issue, and would that be something the Planning Commission would deal with, when they start talking about development, rules and regulations, and such. Haugen responded that there is the tier system that is already in place, plus we have just shown a future land use map that is part of what will be dealt with, and, assuming those are approved, then in the MPO's work program we will be going into the Land Development Code and updating that to match the new plan that will be adopted by the City.

Christensen stated that he would be concerned that once we extend out four-miles, that we then get it back to the Planning and Zoning so they can start putting everything together, but what he is concerned about is all those little "ranchette's" we have out there, people who have two-and-a-half or three acre developments, and getting some recommendations from our planning people, who live here, as to how we deal with letting them construct out-buildings. Kweit commented that he thinks we have that in place now for the two-mile area, so it would just extend to the four-mile area.

Haugen reported that, in working with Brad Genger, Interim City Planner; and Howard Swanson, City Attorney; they are trying to define and clarify definitions for such things as what is an actual non-conforming lot, what are non-conforming uses, what is a farm, etc..

Kerian commented that one of the questions that was raised involves how the current code deals with the farm family, such as when the next generation wants to build a house, and the current generation wants to retain the property, is there a way to handle something like that. Kweit responded that he did not think that was addressed in the current code. Kerian said, then, that that may be one issue that needs to be addressed. She asked if they could get an exemption for this under the current code. Kweit responded that he wouldn't think they could. Gengler added that this is something that Planning is trying to iron out. He said that he has actually received quite a few calls on this issue from people that may not have built yet, but have a recorded two-and-a-half acre lot, and are wondering if they can still build. Christensen suggested that a study committee needs to be set up, with our planning and zoning people, to address these issues. Kweit responded that the Land Use Committee has, and will be looking at these issues.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY KERIAN, SECONDED BY KWEIT, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 8TH, 2006, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:36 P.M.. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant