

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, February 8, 2006 – 1:30 p.m.  
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:35 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll, the following members were present: Wayne Lembke, Grand Forks Civil Engineer; Kent Ehrenstrom, MNDOT-Bemidji; Ryan Brooks, East Grand Forks City Planner; Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Richard Onstad, Grand Forks County Engineer; Roger Foster, Grand Forks Cities Area Transit Superintendent; Charles Durrenberger (proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks City Planning; Dean Wieland, East Grand Forks City Engineer, Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck (via conference call); and Lane Magnuson, Grand Forks County Planner.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Julie Romig, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; Marissa Champion, GF/EGF Intern; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Brad Bail, Floan-Sanders; Mike Kamnikar, MNDOT-Bemidji; John Sayer, HDR Engineering (via conference call), and Dave Kline & Stacy Hanson, NDDOT-Bismarck (via conference call).

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MINUTES**

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY FOSTER, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**SUSPEND AGENDA**

Haugen stated that because we already have John Sayer, HDR Engineering, on the phone, it would seem appropriate that we suspend the agenda to move item seven up for discussion, which would allow that Mr. Sayer would not have to remain on the phone during discussion of the remaining agenda items.

Consensus was to suspend the agenda, and discuss item seven first.

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**MATTER OF E.G.F. GATEWAY DRIVE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Brooks said that he would like to give a brief update on the status of the study, specifically going over the changes made since last month's Technical Advisory Committee meeting. He explained that the study started a year ago, with the thought that it would be completed by the end of 2005, however, we were unable to meet that deadline, and it did carryover into 2006, but we feel that we are getting a much better product because of this extension.

Brooks went on to explain that they have been working closely with MNDOT, and with the Technical Advisory Committee to get feedback for the study. He stated that one of the reasons this study was done was because of the access management guidelines MNDOT put together for all State roadways. He added that U.S. #2/Gateway Drive was included in those guidelines, so an agreement was made between MNDOT and East Grand Forks that they would work together on an access management study for this corridor when the time came. He pointed out that one of the options MNDOT included in their guidelines was a "category seven", which is a specific management plan, and what we are trying to accomplish with this study.

Brooks commented that East Grand Forks' U.S. #2/Gateway Drive is unique in that it abuts with Grand Forks' U.S. #2/Gateway Drive, which operates much differently than Minnesota does in terms of allowable access points. He stated that they knew they didn't necessarily want to go with as many access points as North Dakota, but still wanted to be able to move traffic through the area, and at the same time balance that with the needs of the citizens, which is what spurred the need for this study.

Brooks added that another reason for doing the study was because of some flooding issues that have come up since the Flood of 1997, specifically the need to close some areas on River Road both earlier, and more often than before.

Brooks referred to the study plan, and went over the alternatives. He pointed out that Alternative 1 is a full access at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W.. He explained that after the January public meeting MNDOT submitted a cost estimate, and asked that the consultant, and staff, look at refining that estimate. He stated that the consultant and staff's original cost estimate for the project was under a million, but MNDOT felt it would be higher, so they took those estimates, refined them, and came up with an estimate of just under two million, which is lower than MNDOT's estimate, but higher than our original estimate. He commented that the information in the packet did not include an illustration of how the cross-section will look, but they do have a bigger version available today if anyone is interested in seeing it, and they will get that into the final document. He pointed out that the estimated cost is \$1.869 million dollars for this intersection, and that does not include right-of-way costs.

Brooks stated that the next alternative they looked at was Alternative 2, which was a full access at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N.E, but this alternative was not chosen as a viable option. He said that Alternative 3 is the ¾ access at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N.E.. He explained that, as discussed at the January Technical Advisory Committee meeting, it was requested that this intersection be off-set from

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the existing  $\frac{3}{4}$  access, so the  $\frac{3}{4}$  that will enter into the southern commercial development will be off-set to the east of the existing  $\frac{3}{4}$  access that goes to the north, which actually provides better site lines, and thus creates a safer access. He said that the cost estimate for this alternative is \$443,000.

Brooks reported that Alternative 4 is the Industrial Park access, which is basically already there to the south, however they will need to hook up the frontage roads, and once development would start on the north side, they would open up the access to the north, which is not there currently.

Brooks said that Alternative 5 was added since the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting, and basically involves putting in a full-access at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W., but only opening it for use during flooding events. He said that this was a request from MNDOT, but there was a lot of refinement and questions as to how this would operate, and how it would be controlled, so it was not a recommended alternative, but they did include it in the report.

Brooks stated that the last thing they really looked at with the report was a lot of future planning, east of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E., which is the current Tesoro Gas Station site. He explained that they looked at where they would want the next traffic light to be located, and they agreed with MNDOT that it should be located at 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E.. He added that they also talked about 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E., which is currently a full-access intersection, becoming a  $\frac{3}{4}$  access or a right-in/right-out access once the light was put in at 11<sup>th</sup>.

Brooks commented that there have been two public meetings held for this study, with the first one occurring in August, and the last one in January. He said that they did receive a lot of good comments from the public, with 10 to 15 people attending each of those meetings.

Brooks stated that, with this being said, he would open this up for discussion. He commented that they do have some better plans available illustrating how the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. access will look, adding that they did not have to disturb the pedestrian underpass, which was a real concern of MNDOT's, but they did not connect the frontage roads on the north side.

Haugen asked if Figure 5.1 will be modified to reflect the changes discussed. Brooks responded it would.

Haugen asked if they had received any additional public comment after the ten day notice period. Brooks responded that they did not, however MNDOT did give them some additional items that have been incorporated into the draft plan. Kamnikar added that if there are any minor changes from now until the final document is drafted, they can be accommodated without having to come back before this body.

Kamnikar stated that he just wanted to add, referring to the last line of the document, that MNDOT has worked with the City of East Grand Forks, the MPO, and the Consultants, and has listened to everyone's concerns, but what it amounts to is that they are responsible for Highway #2, which is a medium level priority, IRL and they have performance measures and goals to

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meet, and it is meeting all of these requirements, even out to 2030. He said that you might ask, that's all fine and good, but how does that affect the City, well it affects the City in that the projects you've identified as Alternative 1, Alternative 3, etc., they still want to be involved in the design plans, and construction phases, but they will not be paying for any of the costs associated with those alternatives, which means they will need to be picked up by the City or the developer. Brooks asked, when you say the costs will be taken care of locally, you aren't suggesting that it will take 100% local funds, but instead can be covered by federal monies that the City might be able to obtain. Kamnikar responded that that is correct, that what he is saying is that the costs will be a local responsibility.

Kamnikar commented that in terms of the study, there is a fine line, sometimes between planning and design, and how far you can go into the detailed design, because you need some of it to be able to figure out if you have a viable alternative or not, and with the alternatives we have discussed with this study, primarily the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. full-access alternative, that they still want the City to look at things that might come up during the design process that may not have been addressed during the study process.

Kamnikar stated that, although Mr. Brooks didn't allude to this, it is included in the study, and that is the issue of emergency vehicles being able to get from one side of the City to the other. He pointed out that there are some other measures that can be taken prior to constructing a full-access intersection at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W., including retiming the signal at Central and Highway 2, extending the left turn lane, pre-empting the signals, placing a fire truck or an ambulance on the south side of the City during flooding events, etc..

Kamnikar said that another issue is the pedestrian tunnel, which has been the topic of numerous discussions by MNDOT. He stated that this tunnel was put in in 2001, so it isn't very old, and MNDOT has talked a lot about it's usage, and the feeling is that if we had it all to do again, we might not have put it in at all. He commented, then, that a lot of thought needs to go into the idea of putting in an overpass at 4<sup>th</sup> Street, as it may or may not be something you want to do.

Sayer asked if MNDOT wanted them to go into more detail on how they have addressed the comments made at the public meeting. Kamnikar responded that they were fine with how they were explained. He added that the thing he would suggest is that there be a note in the document to let people know that the right-of-way costs are not included.

Brooks commented that one other issue that Mr. Kamnikar and himself discussed, which was not mentioned before, on Page 51, where it states that the corridor meets the current performance measures as identified for a MNDOT medium priority IRC, it should read that the corridor meets the current and future performance measures as identified for a MNDOT medium priority IRC.

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY GRANT FINAL APPROVAL OF THE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR U.S. HIGHWAY #2 (GATEWAY DRIVE) IN EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA, SUBJECT***

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***TO THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: 1) INSERT THE WORDS “AND FUTURE” ON PAGE 51; 2) INCLUSION OF COMMENT THAT RIGHT-OF-WAY COSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ALTERNATIVE 1 COST ESTIMATE; AND 3) UPDATE FIGURE 5.1. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**RESUME AGENDA**

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

Haugen reported that the staff report, included in the packets, identifies what the proposed amendments are at this time, and that a copy of the notice of the public hearing being held today was also included.

Haugen referred to the staff report, and pointed out that the proposed amendments primarily focus on the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue South project, which essentially has doubled in size and costs, including the federal costs. He stated that the second amendment is somewhat more minor, in that it shows a decrease in the cost estimate for the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue South project, which also means a decrease in the federal amount as well.

Haugen commented that also identified, and discussed in the next agenda item, is the potential for another amendment to the FY06 T.I.P., and that is the Columbia Road/24<sup>th</sup> Avenue project, but we are not asking for an amendment on that at this time.

Haugen opened the public hearing. There was no one present for discussion. Haugen closed the public hearing.

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY LEMBKE, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE FY2006 T.I.P. AMENDMENT AS SUBMITTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Haugen pointed out that there is a copy of a draft letter included in the packets as well, and explained that a formal copy would be sent to Mr. Benning once the MPO Executive Policy Board takes action on this item next week.

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

Haugen explained that Mr. Benning asked that this item be placed on the agenda. He pointed out that it is NDDOT's preliminary draft of the Urban Program for the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO area.

Haugen reported that the current review of the Columbia Road/24<sup>th</sup> Avenue project indicates that there will likely be more costs involved than is currently programmed. He stated that the City has been discussing the increased costs for this project with the State of North Dakota, who has indicated that they could provide an additional \$900,000 federal funds in 2007. He said that the City Council will be taking action on this issue soon, after which we will then need to take action as well.

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Benning commented that he had promised to bring NDDOT's Project Managers for this project into the conversation, and he would need to excuse himself to go and get them.

Haugen distributed copies of information pertaining to the Statewide Corridor Fund, and stated that he received this information from MNDOT on Monday. He explained that Statewide Corridor funds are funds that can be used to deal with mobility concerns, new bridges, etc.; and is comprised of federal funds that will potentially be available in 2010, 2011, and 2012. He added that these funds are over and above what is being distributed out to the ATPs. He reported that the applications for the 2010 funds are due by March 1, 2006 to the OIM, and for the 2011 and 2012 by April 14, 2006. He asked that everyone take a look at this and let him know if there are any projects that would work for these funds.

Benning introduced Dave Kline and Stacy Hanson, NDDOT's Project Managers for this project, and gave them a brief update on what is occurring with the Columbia Road/24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Project, in terms of additional costs, etc.. Lembke reported that the next step for the City will be to put this item on the Council of the Whole agenda for discussion on February 27<sup>th</sup>, and then on the City Council agenda for action on March 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that they are still working on the access for the Alerus Bank, and on updating the PCR to accommodate that decision. Benning asked what the City Council would be approving, if it would just be the additional costs of the project, or the scope-of-work, or something else. Lembke responded that they would be approving the additional costs, the additional engineering work required, and the purchase of additional right-of-way, as well as the local share costs for the additional \$900,000 in federal funds that we could get in 2007. He added that this is all dependent on whether or not the City wants to move the project back for a 2007 construction date or not.

Kline asked, if everything is approved, the additional costs and the funding from their end, what are they talking about in terms of planned production, PS&E, and the final plans are concerned. He explained that, he as sees this, they are running pretty late with the project development process for the bidding of this project. Lembke responded that Mr. Kline is correct, that if they have to do any modifications based on the Alerus Bank access, it could push the bidding back to November, but if they leave the access as it currently is, the plans and specs are pretty much done, it could be bid in May for an early June start date. Kline commented that they would need to modify the cost participation agreement they have in place, and won't likely be done until early March, so they may need to add on another month. He stated, however, that the agreement could go simultaneously with the production of the final plans, so if they knew by the first part of March that things would remain the same, it could be bid in May, with the award occurring in early June.

Kline asked if NDDOT could draft an amendment to the existing cost participation agreement to include the new costs, and have it ready, provided there are no changes to the access. Benning responded that he thought that would be possible, that they could draft an agreement and then hold it until March 6.

Haugen commented, then, that the MPO should go ahead and try to schedule a public hearing on the T.I.P. amendment for March 8<sup>th</sup>. Benning responded that that would be correct, that the

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MPO would have to amend it's T.I.P., and then NDDOT would have to amend their S.T.I.P. as well. Haugen asked, if the Executive Policy Board did not meet until March 15<sup>th</sup> to take action on the T.I.P. amendment, would that still be within the timelines being discussed. Benning responded it would be pretty close, but they will have to wait and see as this project has a May 19<sup>th</sup> bid opening, and in their department they have to have everything handed in by March 24<sup>th</sup>, including plans, any type of utility or right-of-way searches, etc.. Kline commented that this would give you less then three weeks from the concept approval. Noehre asked if everyone really thought this project will get constructed this summer. Benning asked if there had been a PS&E done on this project yet. Lembke responded that there has.

Haugen said, just for the MPO's purpose of scheduling a public hearing with a ten-day notice, will the City's staff report will be prepared on the 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> of February so, based on staff recommendations, we can prepare a notice, and have available what we think the amendment will be. Lembke responded that the staff report should be done by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February.

Benning asked, if the only change for this project is the increase in cost, does the MPO have to amend it's T.I.P. to reflect that. Haugen responded that they don't have an additional \$900,000 of federal funds programmed for the project, so we would have to amend it to show all the projects costs being done in 2006, and then show a re-payment of the \$900,000 in 2007, so we amend the T.I.P. to show the new total project cost.

Benning then went over additional information concerning the Preliminary Draft 2007-2010 Urban Program, as shown on the document provided in the packets, pointing out that the two 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue projects in 2007 should be moved to 2008, and the DeMers Avenue Separation project should be moved to 2007.

Noehre reported that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue projects show a state cost of \$10,000, which should be \$50,000; and under "other" in 2009 there should be a \$10.722 Million Dollar I/29 Northbound project listed as well. Benning responded he would make these changes.

Haugen asked if Mr. Benning had any announcements regarding the T.E. monies for 2007. Benning responded that letters would be coming out this week.

Haugen commented that our 2010 Regional project was not funded, but he was wondering if our 2011 projects were identified one way or the other. Benning responded that they did some swapping of projects with the District in 2010, and they did acknowledge the MPO's 2011 projects. Haugen asked if the Washington Street Underpass project was shifted to 2011. Benning responded that it was not. Haugen asked if it was listed further out. Benning responded that it could be listed in 2015, or even another year, but he did have a conversation with Mr. Noehre concerning the possibility of just replacing the pavement underneath the roadway, but Mr. Noehre reminded him that the southbound/westbound first intersection needs a right turning movement so the underpass needs to be widened to accommodate it, therefore it will require structural reconstruction, at a cost of about \$16,000,000 to \$20,000,000, and they currently don't have the regional funds available for a project that large.

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Haugen asked when he would be able to get something from NDDOT from which he could draft the MPO's T.I.P.. Benning responded that he would make the changes discussed, and fax an updated copy by tomorrow, and will try to get an official copy mailed out as soon as possible. Haugen stated that he would try to distribute the MPO's T.I.P. project listing next month.

Wieland asked what kind of projects would be eligible for the Statewide Corridor Funds. Haugen responded that projects have to be on corridors of statewide significance, and can be for new bridges, and must be included in a planning document. He added that this fund only provides 50% of the total federal request, so if you had a \$10,000,000 project, you could ask for \$5,000,000, and the remaining \$5,000,000 will have to come through either your normal federal funding process of the ATP, or another means. Kamnikar commented that in order to qualify for these funds, a project must be more than 50% of what the ATP gets in federal funds. Haugen agreed, adding that the ATP gets \$18,000,000 so the project has to cost at least \$9,000,000 or more.

Haugen commented that there is still work on the Highway Safety Improvement Program, on both sides of the river. He added that Minnesota does have some information available on the Safe Route To School Program, although not on the actual solicitation of projects yet, and he hasn't seen much information on this from North Dakota either. Kamnikar stated that the first meeting for a group of people involved in the Safe Route to School Program will be held this Friday, and will continue through December, to develop guidelines for the program.

**MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO FY06 ANNUAL UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM**

Haugen commented that discussion was held at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting concerning the programming of some additional funds, roughly \$200,000 that is available from 2005, in 2006. He said that he has also been trying to work with the 2006 funding estimates, and came up with a guess as to what our combined North Dakota and Minnesota funding will be, roughly \$390,000 in federal funds, the \$200,000 additional funds from 2005, for a total funding program of just under \$600,000. He said that he also included some Minnesota monies, and match requirements, so our program changed from a \$528,000 program to a \$741,000 program.

Haugen stated that projects were submitted to staff from both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, and no current projects were dropped. He added that he decided to just insert the additional work with the current language of the 2006 program, which is shown in the full document included in the packets. He said that he did delete some of the 2005 projects that have already been done.

Haugen referred to the last page of the document, the 2006 Annual Work Program Funding Source Table, and pointed out the changes made to the different categories, and going over the projects scheduled.

Haugen commented that one project that was scheduled to occur this year is aerial photographs. He explained that they did not remove this project, but it may warrant some thought as to whether or not we want to do it now, or wait until the flood protection project has been completed.

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Haugen stated that he thinks he was being conservative in using the \$390,000 figure for 2006 funding. He added that once they know exactly how much funds we will be getting, there may be some additional funds available for projects as well. Benning stated that he just received a copy of the Federal Register, which just came out February 3<sup>rd</sup>, but he hasn't had a chance to look at the numbers, but he was given two of the three sources of funding we get, so he will check to see what our PL funds will be for 2006, and will then put together some numbers for the MPO's.

***MOVED BY FOSTER, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE AMENDED 2006 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Potential Amendment To Bike Plan

Haugen reminded everyone that at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting, discussion was held on a potential amendment to the Bike Plan. He explained that there was some consideration given to changing the planned bike path to a bike lane, and this body recommended that we don't amend the Bike Plan to include that change. He stated that the Grand Forks City Council did take action after the Technical Advisory Committee's meeting, and voted to keep the path in place, therefore the request never went before the MPO Executive Policy Board for their action.

2. RFP for Street/Highway Plan

Haugen reported that they did identify that this Friday afternoon at 1:00 p.m., an informational meeting would be held for perspective consultants. He stated that he would distribute copies of the powerpoint presentation being given at that meeting to the Technical Advisory Committee, as well as a list of who attended in order to keep this body informed.

3. EGF Bus Capital

Ehrenstrom reported that he did send a memorandum to the MPO regarding East Grand Forks' Bus Capital requests for the 2007-2009 T.I.P.. He explained that the memo does request that their Class 600 vehicle be reduced to a Class 400 vehicle, which would in-turn reduce the price of the vehicle to approximately \$80,000 in 2007. Haugen responded that he talked to Mr. Brooks about this, and we need to make sure there is a low-floor vehicle available in that price range as that is the type of vehicle the MPO's plan calls for. Ehrenstrom stated that currently, in MNDOT's 2006 RFP, low-floor buses are classified as Class 700, and the one that Mr. Brooks was previously looking at was included in the S.T.I.P. for 2006, at \$192,000, but it has since increased in class, which brought it's cost up to about \$250,000 to \$275,000. He added that in talking to Mr. Brooks, it didn't appear that that would be a class they would want to purchase. He stated that there were some STP funds involved, \$28,000, which the Transit Sub-committee

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did vote to give to East Grand Forks for the Class 600 bus, but there was a little discrepancy in funds available, and by going to a Class 400 those funds would not be needed.

Haugen stated that they are still exploring this issue, as we still have a need for low-floor technology, so they are still trying to respond to Mr. Ehrenstrom's request. Ehrenstrom reported that they have until April 14<sup>th</sup> to submit their A.T.I.P..

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY FOSTER, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MEETING OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:43 P.M. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Executive Assistant