

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll, the following members were present: Wayne Lembke, Grand Forks Civil Engineer; Ryan Brooks, East Grand Forks City Planner; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks Interim City Planner; J.T. Anderson, MNDOT-Thief River Falls; Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck; Lane Magnuson, Grand Forks County Planner; Nancy Ellis, Polk County Planner; and Wayde Swenson, NDDOT-Grand Forks.

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

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

A quorum was present.

**ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Haugen reported that a request has been made to an additional item on the agenda. He explained that at 2:30 p.m. we will need to suspend the agenda in order to place a call to Bismarck DOT for an update on the North Dakota State Rail Freight Strategy.

Benning commented that he also has some information he would like to share regarding both the Transportation Enhancement and Rural projects for Fiscal Year 2007. Haugen stated that he would think it would be appropriate to discuss this in conjunction with Agenda Item IX.

**APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2006 MINUTES**

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY BENNING, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS:***

***Page 6: Change “Klein” to “Kline”***

***Page 6: Paragraph 3 – Change “PFC” to “PS&E”***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

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**MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO FY2006 T.I.P. ANNUAL ELEMENT**

- a. Public Hearing**
- b. Committee Action**

Haugen reported that at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting discussion was held regarding the possibility of this amendment occurring, and a public notice was placed in the paper announcing that a public hearing for this item would be held at this meeting.

Haugen stated that the project involves the reconstruction of the Columbia Road/24<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Intersection, and that an amendment is required because of some new funding sources being identified for the project last month. He reported that last month we planned on using primarily urban roads monies, some of which would be reimbursed in 2007, however, since that time, NDDOT has programmed safety funds for the project, thus allowing for the project to be totally funded with 2006 dollars. He explained that due to this change, we now need to amend our T.I.P. to show that federal funding will occur in 2006 only, and that the new estimated cost of the project is \$2.19 million. He pointed out that of the \$2.19 million, \$1.9 million will be federally funded, with safety funds covering \$1.49 million of that, and urban roads funds covering \$428,000.

Haugen commented that he did include a copy of the Grand Forks City Staff report to their City Council, which he assumes was approved. Lembke responded that the City Council did approve the request at their last meeting.

Haugen opened the public hearing.

There was no one present for discussion.

Haugen closed the public hearing.

Benning pointed out that this project did have a May 19, 2006 bid letting date, and he was wondering if that had been changed. Lembke responded that it had, that one of the agenda items on the City Council's agenda was to move the bid letting date from May 19<sup>th</sup> to November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. He stated that he did leave a message for Dave Kline Tuesday morning to let him know this, and officially request the change. Benning stated that if you do this you will need to get all the plans and right-of-way inspections in by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Benning commented that this is a pretty good deal for the City of Grand Forks because, as Mr. Haugen stated, you now have about \$1.3 million in urban roads funds that can be used on other projects. Lembke stated that they appreciate NDDOT's assistance in finding the safety funds for this project.

Haugen said that he currently has this listed as just safety funds, and asked if he needs to worry about whether or not it is highway safety improvement funds, or hazardous elimination funds, or if it is okay to leave it as it is. Benning responded that it is HSIP funds. He added that the

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project number will change as well, from SU to HE. Lembke asked if they would need two projects numbers as well. Benning responded they would not.

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

Benning reported that one other issue that may be coming up regarding the T.I.P., possibly next month in-fact, involves an additional \$900,000 in funds, which were reserved for this project, but which can now be used for another project. He said that he has talked to the City of Grand Forks about this, so we may need to amend the T.I.P. should they decide on a project. Haugen commented that he would be handing out information pertaining to this very issue for discussion with Agenda Item IX.

**MATTER OF DRAFT RFP FOR GRAND FORKS DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY**

Haugen reported that we did approve an amendment to our 2006 Annual Unified Work Program at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting, adding additional funding that is available to us, and that at the MPO Executive Policy Board meeting following, they recommended using some of those additional funds to do a downtown parking study be done for Grand Forks. He pointed out that a copy of the Draft RFP for this study is included in the packets.

Brooks explained that the reason for the study is because of the many changes that have occurred to the downtown area in the last ten years, as well as those changes that will be occurring in the future. He pointed out that in more recent years there has been quite a bit of residential development in the downtown area, and added that more such development is planned as well, and this has created some parking concerns that we need to address.

Brooks stated that the MPO did a previous study in 1998, which we will work off of to do this new study, and will look at everything related to downtown parking. He said that they will look at utilization throughout the downtown area, will do an inventory of existing parking, and will have the consultant look at both short-term parking issues, and long-term parking issues. He added that they will also explore the possibility of some diagonal parking, which may or may not be allowed in certain areas. He stated that they will also be looking at utilization rates for all parking, and how the City owned lots are being managed.

Brooks reported that they will be utilizing a Downtown Parking Study Steering Committee, which will help us progress through the study. He pointed out that there is a pretty tight timeline for this study, so they would like to get someone on board by May, and hope to get this out by Friday, with a May 6<sup>th</sup> selection date.

Lembke asked when they expected to have a final document completed. Brooks responded that he expected it to be done at least by the end of the year, however, it would be preferable if it could be done earlier than that, maybe by the end of the summer, but that may not be realistic. Benning commented that the thing that kind of kills preferred timeframes is the need to public involvement. Brooks reported that, speaking of public involvement, they have two public

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meetings scheduled, an initial meeting for input from the public, and another to discussion before we go through the approval process. He added, however, that everyone will be welcome to attend any of the meetings that are held with the steering committee as well.

Benning asked what the boundaries would be for the study. Brooks apologized that a map of the study area was not available at this time, however it should be completed soon. Haugen reported that, generically, it will include the area from University Avenue, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, to the southside of the tracks to about Gertrude and the Red River. Gengler asked if it extends beyond the boundaries of what we now have as municipal parking. Brooks responded it would. Haugen added that the greenspace near the Herald building, as well as the opposite corner will also house some condo and apartment units, which will certainly impact the parking in that area.

Lembke commented that one of his concerns is that the study is done during the timeframe in which Central High School is in session, as student parking has a major impact in the downtown area. Brooks agreed that this is a good point to consider, and we may have to do some of the work on our own in order to accomplish this.

Discussion on public input ensued.

Haugen stated that one of the biggest issues will be the diagonal parking on the downtown streets. He added that the Engineering Department has dug up some 20-year old correspondence regarding the DOT not approving diagonal parking, but a lot of the politicians have been suggesting it as a solution. Benning said that this same issue has been discussed in Bismarck as well. He added that he thinks this issue is actually addressed in the cross-maintenance agreements with the DOT.

***MOVED BY LEMBKE, SECONDED BY GENGLER, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE DRAFT RFP FOR THE DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY AS SUBMITTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF DRAFT RFP FOR AERIAL PHOTOS**

Haugen commented that in the original Annual Unified Work Program we had this scheduled to take place in 2006, however a brief discussion on the possibility of delaying it until the flood protection project has been completed was held, with the result being that it be done this year, therefore this RFP was created.

Romig explained that they are proposing to have aerial photos taken of a 143-square mile area, to include the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, as well as a portion of the MPO Study area. She stated that they would like to have photos with either a four- or six-inch pixel ground resolution. She said that she also added a flight height requirement for four- and six-inch pixel resolution, and a micron specification that was not included in the RFP you received in the packets. She referred to the RFP, and pointed out where this change would be located.

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Romig reported that they are looking at a timeline of this spring, when the snow has melted, but before the trees leave out. She added that she hopes to have the RFP out by March 10<sup>th</sup>, with a quick turn-a-round, and completion date of the beginning of May.

Brooks asked if the membership of the selection committee had been determined yet. Romig responded that it had not. Lembke asked what the cost estimate of doing this is. Romig responded that in the past the cost was much lower than what she is anticipating it will be this time, with an estimate of about \$50,000. Lembke asked what was programmed for this in the work program. Haugen responded that they had programmed \$25,000, which was based on the \$18,000 cost for doing this in 2003. Romig asked if, when this was done in 2003, it was piggy-backed with another study. Magnuson responded that it was not, but added that the firm they chose to do the photos had done previous photos, and had a lot of the groundwork and monuments already done, thus a lower cost for us. Romig stated that CPS/Floan-Sanders will be doing our ground control at no cost to us.

Benning commented that, typically, the MPO's are a sub-grantee of the State, with money flowing from them to the MPO, so he would ask that the seven selection criteria be used in the RFP. He explained that by doing so, you would not be taking the chance of getting into trouble with FTA should they decide to audit you. He added that if that were the case, and you didn't use the seven criteria, FTA could actually ask that you repay any funding you receive, therefore, he would advise you use at least four or five of the seven options. Haugen stated that it was his understanding there was delineation between a product like aerial photos versus a planning document, at least that is what both Ryan and himself got out of the meeting in Bismarck a year ago. Brooks agreed, adding that he thought data sets were different than planning studies. Benning responded that he would have to personally agree with that, but, again, he is just trying to offer some guidance so you don't get in trouble with FTA later.

Haugen asked if the committee members wanted to address the issue of membership for the selection committee. After some discussion, it was determined that there should be two members from East Grand Forks, two members from Grand Forks, and one MPO representative.

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY GENGLER, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE RFP FOR THE SOLICITATION OF 2006 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE ENTIRE MPO STUDY AREA SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS:***

***1) Page 7 – Second bullet: At the end of the paragraph add the following sentence – “Selection committee will consist of two staff members from Grand Forks, two staff members from East Grand Forks, and one MPO staff member.***

***Page 8 – Third paragraph: At the end of the paragraph add the following sentence – “The flight elevation for 6-inch should be no less than 5040 feet and 2000 feet for 4-inch resolution”.***

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*Page 8 – Last paragraph: At the end of the paragraph add the following sentence –  
“Both 4- and 6-inch photos should be at 12-15 microns.*

- 2) *That the selection committee consist of two representatives from the City of East Grand Forks, two representatives from the City of Grand Forks, and an MPO Representative.*

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF DRAFT RFP FOR GRAND FORKS LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE  
UPDATE**

Haugen reported that, again, in the MPO’s Annual Unified Work Program it was identified that once the City of Grand Forks’ Land Use Plan has been completed a revision will need to be made to their Land Development Code so that many of the concepts being crafted in the Land Use Plan about smart growth, livable communities, etc., can be implemented easily through the code.

Haugen referred to the RFP, and pointed out that the timeline is as follows: 1) March 10 – Advertise; 2) April 7 – Submittal Deadline; 3) End-Of-Year – Final Document. He added that there is a five member selection committee that is comprised of three Grand Forks Planning Commission members, the Planning Director; and the MPO Executive Director. He stated that the selection criteria does use four of the seven selection options.

Haugen stated that this was originally programmed in the MPO’s Annual Unified Work Program, however an amendment was necessary to increase the amount of funding needed due to the possibility of the City of Grand Forks hiring a new Planning Director from outside the area. Magnuson asked what the amended funding amount was. Haugen responded that it was amended to \$90,000.00.

Benning asked where it listed a contact person. Haugen responded it was located on the second page of the Scope of Work. Benning suggested it be included on the cover page as well.

***MOVED BY GENGLER, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A  
RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE UPDATE TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT  
CODE FOR THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS SUBJECT TO THE ADDITION OF A  
CORRESPONDENCE CONTACT PARAGRAPH TO THE COVER PAGE. MOTION  
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF FY07-FY10 T.I.P. TABLES**

Haugen distributed copies of the Draft FY07-FY10 T.I.P. Tables, and a copy of the Urban Program projects. He referred to the Urban Program document, and explained that it shows what used to be the North Dakota program for our area.

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Haugen reported that he stopped working on the draft T.I.P. tables because late last week there was the possibility of some projects being added and/or moved on the North Dakota side, which Mr. Benning alluded to already, so he thought he would wait to complete them until after this meeting concluded in order to get a better idea of what might be occurring with those projects. He referred to the tables, and pointed out that staff just amended the 2006 T.I.P. to take care of anything in 2007, which is noted on the left side of the tables. He added that in 2008 there is a note next to the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Urban Road project indicating that it may be moved forward a year. He asked Mr. Benning if he had any idea when that decision would be made. Benning responded that he is working with Wayne on this right now, but he thinks that they will probably move it into a November 2007 bid opening for construction. He added that they have at least a million dollars in 2007, of federal funds, but if it takes, say, \$1.4 million, the remaining monies will come out of fiscal year 2008. Haugen commented that the Technical Advisory Committee will be meeting again on April 12, at which a public hearing will be held on the Draft T.I.P., so ten day prior to that he would like to have available what we think the Draft T.I.P. will be, so he hopes the Engineering Department will know if they want to move this project by them. Lembke responded that he foresees it being submitted for approval to the City Council at their April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, which wouldn't quite meet the ten day notice timeline. Haugen stated, however, that we should have a pretty strong idea of whether or not they will approve moving it up on the April 3<sup>rd</sup> by March 27<sup>th</sup>.

Benning distributed copies of the Fiscal Year 2007 T.E. Urban Projects Prioritization List sheet. He explained that it was finalized on January 23, 2006, and the first six projects were the projects selected for funding. Haugen asked, then, for the Grand Forks project to be funded in 2007, one of the big projects selected would have to not be done, is that correct. Benning responded that both Grafton and Minot's projects would have to not be done to get any funding.

Benning explained that the Director's Task Force consisted of ten agencies this year, with five agencies having been on it previously, and five additional agencies being added. Haugen asked if these agencies are placed on the force for two year commitments. Benning responded that that is correct.

Brooks asked if Mr. Benning saw any of the feedback from the committee other than just the scores. Benning responded that he had. Brooks stated that the reason he asks this is to determine if the reason our projects scored so low was due to something we didn't include on the application, or some other reason. Benning responded that there was nothing missed on the application, it is just that they try to keep things evenly distributed. Brooks said that he is just wondering if it would be beneficial to submit the same projects in the future or not. Benning responded that with the randomness of ten agencies, it is almost like a lottery. He added that they did include more funding this year than in the past, and everyone on the task force understands the importance of these projects, of the T.E. program.

Haugen asked if anyone recalled if the ranking of the Grand Forks projects on this list followed the priority ranking the MPO submitted. Brooks stated that he thinks the two landscaping projects were inverted from what we submitted, so the task force probably doesn't put too much

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weight in our priority rankings because they have their own ranking system. He asked if Mr. Benning had any idea on this. Benning responded he didn't, but he does have a cumulative funding table from 1994 through 2006, which shows the dollar amounts that were awarded for T.E. projects, and Grand Forks is ranked third out of thirteen cities having their projects receive funding. Brooks said that he was actually referring to the priority ranking we put forth on the projects, but that group probably doesn't even get that information. Benning responded that they don't, that they just take all the projects submitted and throw them in for consideration, as not all the cities have a priority ranking system.

Haugen referred to the Urban Program sheet, and pointed out that there it shows two regional projects, one of which he has seen correspondence alluding that it may be moved back a year, and he was wondering if that is now being confirmed. Benning responded that yesterday they met on their Draft S.T.I.P. projects, and the lift station on Columbia Road will be programmed for funding in Fiscal Year 2009. He added that they are in the process of developing an RFP to have a consultant do the environmental document. Haugen asked if the urban side of that lift station should be moved back a year as well. Benning responded it should. Haugen stated that what this means, then, is that the only projects scheduled in 2008 would be the ones on I-29, for the preparation of the reconstruction, the cross-over, and engineering. He said that this means, then, that the two regional projects are being moved back a year, one of the urban projects will be moved forward a year, and the other urban project will be moved back a year, thus leaving the I-29 projects in 2008.

Haugen referred to the other side of the document, which shows the 2009 projects, and asked if this list would remain the same, with the exception of the project being moved from 2008, except for the regional project, which is to be moved back to 2010. Benning responded that that would be correct.

Haugen referred to the Draft T.I.P. tables for East Grand Forks, and went over them briefly, stating that they are pretty simple and straight-forward, as there aren't many projects programmed. He added that the City does receive, through the ATP, every fourth year a pot of money to work with, so, if you will notice, the 2010 year has the term "illustrative" above it as Minnesota is not approving the fourth year of a T.I.P. or S.T.I.P. this year, so, instead of trying to create a separate illustrative project, they just used the term on this column on the Minnesota side. He explained that in 2010 East Grand Forks has "illustratively" scheduled a full intersection at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. and Gateway Drive, which was discussed at our last meeting. Anderson stated that he has one comment he would like to make regarding the 2010 project, and he knows that MNDOT has basically given a cost range of \$1.5 Million to \$3 Million dollars for that project, and, after reading the minutes of the last Executive Policy Board meeting, it appeared there was some concern with the \$3 Million dollar figure, but he doesn't think they are married to that figure. He added that he would just like to caution everyone, as he is very intimately familiar with that stretch of road as he help build it, and he knows that there are quite a bit of issues with grade separation there, so he would like to see a lot of work done to the layout before anything is done. He stated that, while MNDOT is not opposed to the intersection, they aren't willing to put any funding toward it, and want to make sure everyone has a pretty

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good handle on the estimated costs as we get closer to doing the project. Brooks responded that, as they go through the project development, they are aware that they will be crossing some super elevated curves there. Anderson stated that that was his concern, as it might take some considerable digging into the highway to get what you need in there. Brooks said that he is aware, and is comfortable with going forward as they have been working with Floan-Sanders, who did a lot of the work on that roadway back in 2001 for MNDOT, and they were the ones that came up with the cost estimate. He added that the \$1.287 includes about \$300,000 for right-of-way costs, and that may be less if we don't try to connect up with the frontage road. Anderson reiterated that he just wants everyone to be cautious as they proceed.

Haugen stated that he would try to incorporate what has been discussed, as soon as possible, late next week, and distribute out to the Technical Advisory Committee members, the preliminary draft listing of tables for a two week review, so that when he does the public notice, the document will be pretty close to what we will approve in April.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. North Dakota State Rail Freight Strategy Update**

Benning apologized for not getting this on the agenda earlier, but it is something that just came up. He distributed copies of the North Dakota State Rail Freight Strategy document, and stated that Jack Olson, NDDOT Planning and Programming Division; and Tim Horner, Office Of Transportation Programs, Bismarck, would be giving a brief overview on it, via conference call.

Horner reported that this all stems from an activity that was initiated by BNSF back in September, and then the State became involved along with a few communities. He stated that at a recent meeting it appeared that this initiative has the potential for moving forward, so the Governor and the Director asked them to convey the status of this North Dakota State Rail Freight Strategy activity to the MPO's. He explained that it is his understanding the Governor plans on talking to the Mayor of Grand Forks soon, if he hasn't already, and, as everyone knows, once that happens they contact the MPO to find out more about it, so they thought they would give the MPO's as much information as possible in order to help answer those questions.

Horner stated, again, that this all stems from a September proposal by BNSF to come up with a way to increase the opportunities for container type service in the North Dakota area. He explained that BNSF proposed that they could possibly work with a unit train size load of containers on a weekly, or other routine basis, whereby they would drop off part of a train in Fargo, in Dilworth, in Minot, and then they could pick them up again later. He stated that details still need to be worked out with this, but that is their proposal for the intermodal line.

Horner said that there have been come preliminary discussions with some of BNSF's staff about what this all really means. He added that they have taken into account that Bismarck is proposing a Northern Plains Commerce Center, and that BNSF has a service area that they are targeting as well, so when they started looking into this further they found that it does cover the entire state in terms of the potential service area.

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Horner reported, however, that BNSF was also saying that they would like the State to be a coordinator of discussions between all the entities, so that was one of the reasons they got involved. He added that there have been a couple of preliminary meetings held, and, although they are still a little unsure how everything will get going, a larger meeting was held last week that was heavily attended by BNSF, with seven or eight employees from their various west coast offices, from their Dallas/Fort Worth offices, as well as locally, including the Fargo area, so it looked like it was finally gaining some momentum, which led to the document you just received.

Benning referred to page 2, and asked if they were referring to container freight movement. Olson responded that that was correct, and explained that it is a dedicated intermodal unit train, so when the railroad talks about intermodal movements, they are talking about a dedicated container shipment of about 100 to 110 cars with containers. He added that most likely at this point, the discussion is about agricultural movements, westbound agricultural movements in particular.

Olson referred to the North Dakota State Rail Freight Strategy document, and reported that it is kind of a counter-proposal back to BNSF. He explained that BNSF indicated there was an interest on their part to provide a co-load service, which came about because of a number of studies Fargo, Minot, and Bismarck have done over the last couple of years. He added that they have been in contact with BNSF on many, many occasions, and made trips down to their offices to talk to them about getting intermodal service. He stated that intermodal service to BNSF is really based on whether or not there would be enough volume to make the service worthwhile. He explained that as they started looking at the information that was put together from the three different studies, they really started thinking that it might work, however they didn't want to have to pick one site over the other, so in the last couple of months the State of North Dakota has stepped forward and said that, while they weren't going to pick a particular location, they did have a single plan for the State that they wanted to discuss with them. He went on to explain that that plan started gelling together when Bismarck realized that they probably weren't going to be having dedicated intermodal service, that while they could get containers, it would only be on merchandise trains, so they backed off their original concept of intermodal service, which then offered BN the opportunity to bring up their idea of a co-load concept between Dilworth and Minot, in which 50% of the trains could come from Minot, and 50% from Dilworth, which the Director determined would give us pretty good coverage for the entire State.

Olson stated that the State then hired Upper Great Plains to go back and look at the three studies, and discount double-counts. He said, for example, that volume estimates from RDO, the State Mill and Elevator, and other businesses in Grand Forks were included in all three of the studies, and because they couldn't be counted three times, Mark Burwick from Upper Great Plains took that information, and included it in the potential container volume estimates shown on page 2.

Olson commented that, taking all this information, and going forward caused the discussion to get more into verifying the data from BNSF, and discussed questions regarding rates and services issues, with the consensus being that BNSF would go back and look at what they could possibly

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do in terms of repositioning container costs in the Dilworth area. He stated that, as you may or may not be aware, at the end of January, Evergreen was no longer allowing it's containers to be dropped in Dilworth for loading, but instead was dropping them in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and then to it's destination somewhere in Minnesota, at which time the shipper had the option of bringing the container back to the Dilworth facility for loading. He added that this all comes down to a matter of rates and times of service, and they are now waiting for the railroad's response to these issues. He stated that the railroad indicated that they would be willing to give them names of the steamboat companies most likely to work on this, and that they would indicate to the steamboat companies their willingness to provide this kind of co-load type of services between the Fargo, Dilworth, and Minot areas, and then it will just be a matter of the communities working from there to get a coordinator to get freight either to Minot or Fargo in such quantities that they would be able to support unit trains of container movements to the west coast.

Olson said that this is a brief overview on what has occurred, so they are just waiting to get the railroad's information on the rates and so-forth. He added that he knows that the Cities of Minot and Fargo are talking about holding a meeting to determine how they could work together to develop those agreements that would be needed to get this going, and how they can get a coordinator on board to assist once it is.

Olson referred to the maps that were included in the document, and explained that they illustrate generalized service areas, with one map showing the trans-load service area, and the other the co-load service areas. He explained that, given the nature of trans-load, and the kind of products you are working with, as well as the economics, when they worked with Upper Great Plains on this they said that a 200-mile service/draw area is not an unreasonable distance for a trans-load. He referred to the second map, and pointed out that it shows the intermodal co-load service area, with Minot showing a 150-mile radius, and Fargo showing a 125-mile radius. He explained that the reason for this difference is due to Fargo being in a service area overlap with St. Paul and with Winnipeg, and when you go northwest of Minot you get into an overlap with Regina, so these service areas only represent reasonable distances for intermodal without getting into competition with other intermodal service facilities. He then referred to the last map, and stated that it illustrates a kind of composite where both the trans-load and the intermodal service areas are shown, and, basically, the point made is that almost all of North Dakota lies within a reasonable service area distance between the co-load concept, and/or the trans-load concept.

Haugen asked for a basic definition of both co-load and trans-load service areas. Horner responded that the co-load intermodal will consist of dedicated intermodal container trains, with 110 cars of containers all going to basically the same location, from Seattle and Tacoma to the west coast. He added that in one week, for example, of those 100 containers, 70% might come from Fargo, 30% from Minot, and then the next week it might be a 50/50 split, and the next week some other combination. He stated that the coordinator that will be working with those cities will make the determination as to where the best location is to take them, and how to get empties, etc.. He then explained that the trans-load facility would be used more for bulk items such as lumber, gravel, steel, warehousing equipment, etc., with Bobcat being a primary user of this type

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of facility for moving their equipment out. He explained that this will be a car-load service, or what they call a merchandise train, with the frequency and reliability being less, and with the velocity of the trains taking up to as many as ten to eighteen days from the coast, while the co-load intermodal would be looking at taking three to four days service to the west coast, so there are some service issues there. He commented that the big reason for these service issues is because the southern, or main BNSF line that goes through North Dakota is not their intermodal line, it is their co-line, while the line that goes west of Fargo, to Cassleton, and then northwest to Minot is their intermodal line.

Benning asked about the comment that we are waiting for BNSF to give us the rates. Olson responded that BN will not give us the rates, per say, but what they will do is to look at what they charge the steamship companies to drop empty containers in Dilworth. He went on to explain that once those containers are dropped in Dilworth, then the farmer or manufacturer will have so many days to load those containers, fill them, and return them to Dilworth where they will be loaded and transported to Minot, where the same process will occur, and then everything will be loaded and transported to the west coast. Benning asked when that information might be received. Olson responded that it is hoped that they would get that information by mid-March.

Olson and Horner cited some different scenarios where these types of services would be most beneficial.

Haugen commented that back in 1996 the City of Grand Forks, the MPO, and the Grand Forks Airport Authority produced an intermodal freight facility study, and he would like to know if that that document was able to be used at all for this. Olson responded that they had NDSU looking at that document, and they had an initiative in NDDOT's big transportation plan, as you may remember, that talked about doing an intermodal study, and they looked at that study, and tried to incorporate the information into that, and then as Fargo did an update, because the data in the 1996 study was quite old, and things had changed drastically in some of the rural markets over the last few years, so they did a survey and they included businesses within a 125-mile radius of the Fargo area, so they surveyed a number of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, Grafton, etc., business to find out what kind of volumes was up there, but yes that document was looked at, and was built upon with more current information. Haugen commented that it would be nice to get the data that Fargo surveyed out of our communities. Olson responded that the best way to get that information would be to contact Mark Burwick at Upper Great Plains directly at (701) 231-9594.

Haugen stated that he had e-mailed Mr. Olson earlier regarding information about a committee being formed, an intermodal freight committee. Olson responded that there are two things that are happening right now, one involves an update of the State Transportation Plan on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, which the MPO's should have received a letter directly; and the other thing they are looking at is doing a Statewide Freight Plan, which should be happening soon. He added that this will be a two-year process, and will involve the creation of an advisory committee, for which they will be looking at the MPO's to be involved. Haugen asked if Mr. Olson had receive his e-mail, as he had also included some bike/ped people. Olson responded that he did receive it.

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Haugen said, then, that Mr. Olson and Mr. Horner are informing us today of a draft strategy that the DOT is considering adopting. Olson responded that this rail-freight strategy is something that was proposed as a way of coming back to what BNSF talked to us about, in terms of the co-load concept for container movements of westbound agricultural products coinciding with the development of this trans-load facility in Bismarck, and that is what we wanted to make sure everyone was aware of, specifically that Grand Forks would not be without service, as they are obviously in a pretty good position because, if this in-fact comes to fruition, you could take products to Dilworth for westbound agricultural products, and you could still have the services out of Winnipeg for national intermodal services as well. Horner added that, overall, what they want to do is keep everyone informed from here-on, and get any input that anyone might have that should be considered, particularly Grand Forks since you did go through that 1996 study, and there are some opportunities for tapping into what you learned at that time.

Olson commented that, if this should come to fruition, there will be opportunities for people in Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, the northeastern part of the State, and the northwestern part of Minnesota for shipping options that will, hopefully, be much improved over what they have now. He said that this is a starting point, and they hope that BSNF's intentions are, in-fact, what they appear to be, and that we can get this to work. Horner added that they weren't as optimistic a couple of weeks ago as they are now, as the last meeting with BNSF, Fargo, and Minot, showed some momentum for being optimistic that something may come of all this.

Olson stated that he was quite pleased when the Fargo group started looking at all of this about a year ago. He added that he made the suggestion to them that they include some shippers from the Grand Forks area because of the proximity, and they readily accepted that, so some of those people have been attending their meetings and are quite excited about the potential of all this.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**2. Mid-Year Review Meeting Date Change**

Benning stated that they are looking at doing the mid-year reviews again, and last year some comments were made about the possibility of maybe moving the meeting date up because August is a busy month with vacations, school starting, etc., so he would like to know if the last week in June would work for everyone, with Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, being the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO's mid-year review date.

After some discussion it was determined that either June 14<sup>th</sup> or June 28<sup>th</sup> would work. Benning stated he would check with the Fargo MPO and see if they would like to do their's the week of June 14<sup>th</sup> as well, and get back to everyone with a date.

**3. NHI Traffic Incident Management Course**

Haugen reported that the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO will be hosting an NHI Traffic Incident Management Course here on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and that he did e-mail everyone this information earlier.

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Haugen stated that this is normally a two-day course, however we have opted to do a one-day course, therefore, he, with input from others, will have to determine how to set up the agenda so that we get as much information as possible in one day.

Haugen distributed copies of a normal two-day course, along with a copy of an e-mail he received from John O'Laughlin, in which he offers some suggestions on agenda items he feels we would benefit from including from the second day.

Haugen commented that this course will be held in the council chambers, from 8:00 to Noon, and from 1:00 to 5:00. He added that they are offering the course with no registration fees, however, would not turn away any offerings to help defray some of the costs to the MPO. He stated that there are about 35 spots available, and more information will be forthcoming.

**4. RFP For Street And Highway Update**

Haugen reported that RFPs for the Street and Highway Update were due on Monday by 3:00 p.m.. He said that they did receive one proposal. He added that there is a five member selection committee that will review that one proposal, interview them, and determine if they are qualified.

Benning asked what the dollar amount was for this study. Haugen responded that they had programmed \$120,000 for 2006 for consultant work, however this is a two-year study, so there will be some additional monies in 2007.

Benning commented that in the past they used to get, for construction projects, five or six contractors bidding on projects, but last year that went down to an average of three to four bidders. He added that, because this was the only proposal submitted, we may need to determine what might need to be done to get consultants to bid on projects.

**5. Safe Route To School Program**

Lembke asked if there was any new information concerning the Safe Route To School Program. Benning responded that they are now advertising for the position. He said that they did work with MNDOT, and talked to their Safe Route Coordinator in Minneapolis, who was very helpful in their decision on whether they needed to hire an environmental scientist, a technician, or a civil engineer. He stated that after talking to their coordinator, they determined that they would hire a civil engineer for the position, but until that position is filled, there really isn't any additional information available.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***CHAIRMAN HAUGEN ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 3:16 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Executive Assistant