

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Thursday, July 12, 2006 – 1:30 p.m.  
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:38 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Dean Wieland, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Nancy Ellis, Polk County Planner; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks City Planner; Wayde Swenson, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Cindy Voigt (proxy for Wayne Lembke), Grand Forks City Engineer; Rich Sanders, Polk County Engineer; and Dave Leftwich (proxy for Paul Benning), NDDOT-Bismarck.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, MPO Executive Director; Marissa Champion, MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, MPO Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Emily Hatfield, Grand Forks Engineering Intern.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Voigt introduced Emily Hatfield, Grand Forks Engineering Intern, and reported that she would be attending the Technical Advisory Committee meetings until a new Traffic Engineer is hired. She then asked that everyone please introduce themselves as well.

**APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY WIELAND, SECONDED BY ELLIS, TO APPROVE THE JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF DRAFT S.T.I.P.S**

- A. NDDOT DRAFT 2007-2010 S.T.I.P.
- B. MNDOT DRAFT 2007-2009 S.T.I.P.

Haugen reported that there are some unique changes occurring in the Draft S.T.I.P.s, so he thought it might be a good time to review them before August, which is when the MPO finalizes

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their T.I.P. for submittal to the DOTs. He referred to the staff report, and explained that both North Dakota and Minnesota have some financial issues going on. He then referred to a copy of an article from the Fargo Forum, and pointed out that it discusses some of the funding issues MNDOT is experiencing. He added that North Dakota has lumped together their out-years to allow for more flexibility with projects due to the funding issues they are having as well.

Leftwich explained that the reason for their decision to lump the out-years together was reached because of the fact that projects tend to move at times due to unforeseen issues arising, such as right-of-way concerns, construction delays, etc.. So, because this is the general plan for what will be done during the next portion of the S.T.I.P, rather than having a specific date assigned to a project, it was thought that it would be better to just show projects as happening during that time period with no date specific, which, then, allows them to make adjustments as necessary.

Haugen stated that he hasn't received any direction as to whether or not the MPO should follow this same format, or continue to show projects as they currently are in their T.I.P. Leftwich responded that it is his understanding the MPO can do either. He added that NDDOT would actually prefer if they would continue using their current format, but that they could follow this format if they wish.

Haugen reported that back in March and April some time was spent discussing the timing of the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue South project, from 20<sup>th</sup> to South Washington, and it was determined at that time that the project would be shown as a 2008 project, when in-fact it is now being shown in the S.T.I.P. as being a 2007 project. He stated that he would make this change in the MPO's T.I.P. document.

Haugen stated that because there isn't anyone here today from MNDOT, we probably can't really discuss what is going on with Minnesota funding, although for the East Grand Forks portion of the District 2 funding, none of the projects East Grand Forks had programmed are being moved or change in the Draft MNDOT S.T.I.P., but, as noted in the article, they do have some significant funding challenges ahead.

Haugen commented that he has one other question for Mr. Leftwich. He pointed out that on the transit side they have programmed the Job Access Reverse Commute funds out for three years, but not the New Freedom funds. He added that it also appears that only one urban area is receiving the JARC funds. Leftwich responded that that isn't correct, that one area isn't receiving all of the JARC money, but that they are going to have one entity run the JARC program, and administer all of the paperwork, but the actual funds have not yet been distributed out at this time. Haugen asked if the New Freedom monies were going to be handled this same way. Leftwich responded that they are still looking into how they want to deal with the New Freedom monies, adding that they haven't received all of the guidelines on how to handle this fund yet.

Haugen asked if any statewide meetings have been scheduled for these two program. Leftwich responded that he was not aware of any at this time for either program.

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Champion asked if Mr. Leftwich was aware of how the JARC numbers shown were determined, if there was a formula used, or did they come from Fargo. She added that she talked to a couple of people at NDDOT, and they didn't quite understand why Fargo showed the amount listed in the S.T.I.P.. Leftwich responded that they don't have a plan yet as to how to divvy these funds up, so until that is developed, the money needs to be shown somewhere, but it is not their intention that it will all go to Fargo. Champion commented that the tables showing how much funding North Dakota will receive for the small MPOs is a smaller amount than what Fargo programs for, so she is wondering how they came up with the numbers they did. Leftwich responded that he doesn't know the answer at this time, and will have to look into it further.

Swenson reported that Les Noehre had said that any comments anyone might have regarding the Grand Forks District's projects should get them into him by July 15, 2006.

Haugen stated that he also included a copy of the entire summary from the NDDOT S.T.I.P., but was unable to do so for Minnesota since he did not have the full S.T.I.P., so you got what he had. He asked if the formula for the urban program was going to change. Leftwich responded that some of the program names have changed, and they are looking at this closely, but the basic dollar amount is not scheduled to be changed at all. Haugen commented, however, that the programs referenced in the current formula no longer exist. Leftwich responded that this is true, however with each highway bill they change the names a little bit, and even though the money is being appropriated under slightly different programs, the basic core programs are still there in one form or another, so they haven't seen a lot of change in terms of the size of the pot from then to now. He added that no matter what, there won't be much of a change up or down even though the core programs have had their names changed, therefore the City should not see a reduction in funding whether the names are changed or not. Haugen asked, then, if the City should be expecting an increase. Leftwich responded that that wouldn't necessarily be the case, that it depends on how much is actually appropriated as the numbers shown currently are only projections.

Haugen stated that this is a draft S.T.I.P., and comments are due Friday. He added that the MPO will continue to using the year-by-year format, will move the one project, and will update totals. Leftwich said that that would be good from the DOT's standpoint. Haugen commented that for the Minnesota side there appear to have been no changes between what we sent as our draft and what their S.T.I.P. is showing for our projects, so we should be able to have a public hearing and final approval at our August meeting.

Haugen said that the only other thing to note is that Minnesota is only doing a three year T.I.P. this year, and North Dakota is doing a four year T.I.P.

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSIT PLAN**

Champion reported that she did give an update on what we are doing to develop the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting. She added that, as was just discussed regarding the S.T.I.P.s, New Freedom, Job Access Reversed Commute, elderly, and disabled are all FTA programs for which the MPO area should be available to receive with the adoption of this plan. She stated that we are in the process of

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working with various stakeholders within the community that operate human services, including transit, etc..

Champion commented that the Stakeholder group prioritized five strategies, which were listed in the staff report, and are holding a public meeting next Thursday to gain input from our targeted demographics, including low income, disabled, seniors, etc., in order to see what types of projects are wanted.

Champion stated that a Draft Coordinated Plan should be available for the next meeting for approval.

Voigt asked about the time and location of the public meeting. Champion responded that it is scheduled to take place on Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room #A102.

Haugen reported that this plan will provide us with the eligibility to apply for funding, however it does not mean these strategies will move forward unless funding is available. He added that it is hoped that a final draft will be ready for the Technical Advisory Committee and Executive Board's approval in August.

**MATTER OF PROPOSED FEDERAL MPO PLANNING REGULATIONS**

Haugen reported that the proposed federal regulations are now available, specifically those regarding SAFETEA-LU language, and they are finally updating the federal register to reflect how it affects statewide and MPO planning. He added that the federal regulations have not been changed since ISTEA was done fourteen years ago, and that when TEA-21 was adopted proposed rules and regulations were promulgated, however they did not implement any of those changes, and now with SAFETEA-LU they are proposing the rules included in the packet. Haugen referred to the first register, and explained that it identifies some outreach meetings, with six of them occurring throughout the United States, so if anyone is interested in participating in any of them in person, you are certainly welcome to attend any of them at the sites listed. He added that there is a on-line video conference being held tomorrow from 1:00 to 3:00 Eastern Standard Time, and you can observe it by going onto the website.

Haugen commented that one thing that Federal Highway and Federal Transit are stressing about these regulations is the fact that they are trying to follow the language of SAFETEA-LU more closely than they did previously.

Haugen reported that when this was done during the last proposed go-around, North Dakota joined with some other western states to hire someone to perform a line-by-line comparison, and he was wondering if that was going to be done again this time. Leftwich asked if he was referring to the entire Highway Bill. Haugen responded that he was referring to regulations. Leftwich responded that they do have a five state coalition that does go over any new rules, particularly if they appear to be controversial, to try to work out any concerns or problems there might be. He added that if there are some major problems or glitches that MPO staff might see, they should let him know so that they can be looked into further. Haugen said that it was his

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understanding that last time a firm was hired to go through the rules and regulations line-by-line, but it appears that this will not be the case this time. Leftwich responded that he isn't sure which firm that was. Haugen said that he would fax what was produced through that consortium last time. Leftwich added that they have their regular lobby group from the five states that do this kind of work for them, but if there is other information available, he would appreciate it if it could be forwarded to him. Haugen explained that when TEA-21 came through they proposed updating the register, however a lot of people thought there was a substantial amount of changes and did a line-by-line comparison of the new regulations versus the old ones, so the five state region hired someone to do their own line-by-line comparison of the old versus the new. Leftwich stated that he would appreciate it if Mr. Haugen would forward that information to him.

Haugen stated that the comment period is open until September 7, 2006, after which Federal Highway will have to wade through all the comments received, so it will be a while before any final rules are completed, so until that time we are operating under the old rules along with the SAFETEA-LU code, which aren't always the same. He added, however, that the SAFETEA-LU code trumps any regulations that aren't in cohesion.

**MATTER OF JULY 19<sup>TH</sup> MEETING WITH URS REGARDING STREET/HIGHWAY PLAN**

Haugen distributed copies of an agenda and packet from URS, who is the consultant we hired to help us update our Street and Highway Plan, and explained that they would like to meet with the Technical Advisory Committee on July 19<sup>th</sup> to go over the scope of the study, transportation issues, goals and objectives, and the project schedule. He stated that he would schedule this meeting for 1:30 p.m. next Wednesday.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **NEW MPO EMPLOYEES**

Haugen reported that the MPO did hire two new employees to replace Ryan Brooks and Julie Romig. He stated that Nancy Ellis has accepted a position, and will begin work on July 24<sup>th</sup>, and the other person is David Hampsten, who is currently in Portland, but will be moving back to Grand Forks in the next couple of weeks.

Haugen commented that David is a native of Grand Forks, graduating from Central High School in 1986, and from the University of North Dakota in 1992 with a Masters Degree. He stated that Nancy has been with Polk County for nine years, and is an East Grand Forks resident.

2. **DEPARTING CITY EMPLOYEES**

Voigt reported that today is her last Technical Advisory Committee meeting. She explained that she has accepted a position with the City of Duluth, Minnesota, and begins her new job as City Engineer on Monday, so Emily will now be attending the Technical Advisory Committee meetings in the future. She stated that Wayne Lembke has also left the City, and has accepted a position with Minnkota Power.

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Haugen commented that it has been a tradition of this body to send letters of appreciation to departing members, so he would entertain a motion to do so for Cindy and Wayne.

***MOVED BY GENGLER, SECONDED BY SANDERS, TO APPROVE STAFF COMPOSE AND SEND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION TO CINDY VOIGT AND WAYNE LEMBKE FOR THEIR SERVICE ON THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY WIELAND, SECONDED BY SWENSON, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2006, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:12 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Executive Assistant