

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

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the November 8th, 2006, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Dean Wieland, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Ryan Brooks (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks City Planner; Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; James Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks City Planner; Richard Onstad, Grand Forks County Engineer; John Thompson, Grand Forks City Traffic Engineer; Roger Foster, Grand Forks Transportation Superintendent; and Paul Benning (via conference phone), NDDOT-Bismarck.

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

Guests present were: Norlyn Schmidt, NDDOT-Bismarck; Ben Ehreth, NDDOT-Bismarck; Jack Olson, NDDOT-Bismarck; Stewart Milakovic, NDDOT-Bismarck; Justin Klabo, Grand Forks City Civil Engineer; and Allen Grasser, Grand Forks City Engineer.

Grasser reported that the City of Grand Forks recently hired John Thompson to fill it's Traffic Engineer position. He commented that Mr. Thompson did work for the City a few years ago, left for a different position, and now has returned to work for us again. The Committee welcomed Mr. Thompson.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 11TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 11TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE GRAND FORKS
DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY**

Haugen reported that Ryan Brooks was the project manager for the MPO on this study, and has continued in that capacity even though he is now a City of Grand Forks employee. He stated that Mr. Brooks is here today to give a brief presentation and update on the study.

Brooks referred to a slide presentation (a copy of which is included in the packet and available upon request), and gave a brief overview of the study.

Presentation ensued.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Brooks asked if anyone had any suggestions for additional angled parking sites, otherwise staff will essentially go forward and recommend to the MPO Executive Board the two recommended pilot sites of North 3rd and 2nd Avenue North.

Benning asked how long they intended to study the pilot sites, six months or longer. Brooks responded that they didn't really have a time frame set, but that they would like to test them during the winter months as well as the summer months, so would actually like to see them in place for one year.

Brooks commented that they also want people to remember that angle parking isn't the only solution for the downtown. He pointed out, unfortunately, that the focus of a lot of people on this study was the angle parking issue, but that it really only adds 52 additional spaces, so it is only one piece to the puzzle, and won't solve all of the parking issues in the downtown.

Benning asked if there were any obstacles, such as mailboxes or fire hydrants that might get hit when using angled parking. Brooks asked if he was referring to the overhang area. Benning responded he was. Brooks stated that nothing was shown by the consultant that might be a concern.

Wieland asked what the reason was behind the 1-hour parking limits. Brooks responded that it was suggested by the City Council. Haugen added that he thinks it is because of the students. Wieland stated that he knows, from a business standpoint, having 1-hour parking might be a problem. Brooks agreed, adding that they tried to caution them that even restaurants would have a hard time guaranteeing that their patrons would be in and out in an hour, and if someone gets a ticket because they were there a little longer than an hour, there will probably be a lot of complaints from the downtown businesses. Grasser commented that it is his understanding that a survey is going to be sent to the businesses regarding this issue, so they will have an opportunity to speak for or against it.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

Noehre suggested that if they aren't going to put in the raised curb immediately, and are going to just paint it at first, they may want to place some kind of planter, or barrier, to help people understand they aren't supposed to park there. Brooks pointed out, however, that each planter will also cause maintenance concerns as well. Noehre responded that they don't have to use permanent planters, or really heavy planters, but at least should have something to get people accustomed to not parking there.

Benning stated that he did work with Mr. Grasser, and they found a copy of a cost participation and maintenance agreement for the downtown area. He said that there is a portion in the agreement, on which both NDDOT and the City signed off on, that discusses the fact that there would be no diagonal parking allowed in the downtown area, so when you get your draft report completed, and you get your comments back, they can then try to get approval to change the agreement to allow diagonal parking. Brooks asked if they would only amend for the pilot sites, or would they amend for the local streets, and then let the locals decide how to phase the diagonal parking in. Benning responded that they would let them change the parking on the local streets. He added that he he did talk to Dave Leftwich about this, and he said that they would need copies of a study that they could forward on to their director requesting that they be allowed to modify the language in the agreement to allow for diagonal parking. He said that once they get approval from their director, then he can modify the agreement between NDDOT and the City. Noehre requested that a copy be sent to the district offices as well.

After further discussion on amending the contract, it was determined that NDDOT would grant temporary approval for the pilot test sites through letter format.

***MOVED BY FOSTER, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO FORWARD A
RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE
DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Grasser stated that he is trying to figure out how to work this through the City's system. He said that a meeting was held, but that no official City Council action has been taken, so he was wondering if, when the MPO approves the report, when it has gone through the MPO Executive Policy Board for approval, if a copy can be forwarded to him to use as his jump-off point to create the actual staff report to the City Council for their approval, which will then allow them to send something to the DOT in order for them to create their memorandum of understanding, or amendment, to allow for the diagonal parking.

**MATTER OF FINAL FY 2008 NDDOT TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
APPLICATIONS**

Haugen reported that November 1st was the deadline for submitting applications to the MPO for FY 2008 NDDOT Transportation Enhancement funding. He added that November 9th, then, is the deadline for submitting those approved applications to the NDDOT.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

Haugen stated that one application was submitted, from the City of Grand Forks, and a copy of that application was included in the packets. He referred to the application, and explained that it is a request for \$188,000 of Federal Transportation Enhancement funds to help them reconstruct a multi-purpose pedestrian path on South 20th Street, between 36th and 40th Avenues South. He pointed out that the total estimated cost of this project is just over \$300,000.00.

Haugen commented that MPO staff reviewed this application, and since it is an existing multi-use path, felt that reconstruction of the path would fit the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and since only one application was received, staff can also recommend high priority ranking be given to the project as well.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Hampsten stated that he talked to Justin Klabo briefly about this project, and asked about putting the path on the other side of the street, where there currently is no sidewalk, and he is just curious as to what his response to that might be. He explained that the east side of 20th has no sidewalk from 32nd Avenue South to 40th Avenue South, and if put in it would connect more smoothly, so he would like to confirm that it is their intent to put the path on the east side of 20th, between 36th and 40th Avenues South. Klabo responded that that is the intent.

Hampsten said, then, that he was wondering if there were any provisions; as currently from 32nd to 36th Avenues South there is a small portion of a former bikepath about 8-feet wide, and then the rest is a 5-foot wide sidewalk from 32nd to 36th, on the west side only, and there isn't any sidewalk on the east side of the street, and yet there is a facility about midway down that is a handicapped facility, a development or work place for handicapped individuals, so he was rather concerned and hopeful that we could somehow fit sidewalks on the east side, and was wondering if anyone had any ideas on how we could fund that down the road, or whether it could be funded within this project.

Klabo responded that, with what little history he was able to learn on this, the sidewalks were not initially put in because there wasn't any development to the south. He said that he did discuss this issue with their sidewalk inspector, and was told that it is something that could be looked at next year.

Hampsten stated that the reason he brought this up is because handicapped individuals do use these sidewalks heavily; and he does acknowledge there is a gap between 36th and 40th, and that the old paths that were put in several years ago are in need of replacement, but the gap between 32nd and 36th is heavily used, with people using the street, which is a collector and very busy, which is a major safety concern, so he was wondering, if it can't be tacked on to this project, would there be some way of scheduling an improvement there. He said that what we have here is that they are implying that it is connecting to an existing bikepath between 32nd and 36th, which, in-fact does not really exist as it is a 5-foot sidewalk that is being used by pedestrians and cyclists, but it doesn't meet ADA requirements, or even old bikepath standards, so it is kind of a path from nowhere to a school, which is good, but in the meantime you have children going

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

through a very dangerous section to a safe path, from areas north of 32nd to 36th, so that is his chief concern, that it is convenient for what it is, but it leaves a significant gap in the system, and doesn't cover that gap.

Grasser responded that, recognizing that they probably can't fill that gap, is it Mr. Hampsten's recommendation that they not do the project. Hampsten responded that his recommendation is to do the project, but to recognize that there is a gap, and that the project is not filling that gap, that even with the current sidewalks it really isn't connecting. He stated that he isn't objecting to the project, that it is a definite improvement upon the system that we have, but it is just too bad that it wasn't extended to 32nd, so he is just voicing his concern that it isn't connecting to 32nd. Brooks pointed out that this project is for 2008, and Mr. Klabo said that their sidewalk inspector suggested that the issue of connecting the gap could be added to next year's project list, so that section would actually be completed before this project is even started. Hampsten asked how the gap project would be funded. Brooks responded that he thinks it would be assessed.

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY THOMPSON, TO FORWARD A
RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE
CITY OF GRAND FORKS' FY 2008 NDDOT TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
APPLICATION AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE MPO'S LONG RANGE
TRANSPORTATION PLAN, AND SET A PRIORITY RANKING.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**MATTER OF FINAL DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR BRIDGE TRAFFIC INCIDENT
MANAGEMENT PLAN BRIDGE CLOSURE OPERATIONAL STUDY**

Haugen reported that this item has been brought before this body at previous meetings, and that further comments have been received, with most of them suggesting that we broaden the scope-of-work. He stated that they have tried to address those comments as best they can within their resources.

Haugen said that originally they were focusing mostly on bridge closures, but comments were made from both DOTs that there are other reasons why one or more bridges might be closed at any given time, so they asked that we consider all scenarios that could potentially cause bridges to close. He referred to the report, included in the packet, and pointed out that it does include those scenarios.

Haugen referred to page five of the draft document and went over the scenarios listed briefly.

Haugen commented that they were also reminded that two of the three bridges are in-fact owned by the DOTs, so we need to make sure that protocol for closures and openings of those bridges is followed, and they are included in any decisions that are made.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

Haugen referred to page seven of the draft, and pointed out that the cost continues to increase, and that we are now involved in a \$54,000 study with A.T.A.C..

Brooks commented that, and this is just a thought on the kick-off meeting, and it may already have been considered, but it might be a good idea to include BNSF on this. Haugen agreed, explaining that he forgot about those two connections on the Stakeholder committee. He stated that during our last flood event we had two trains running on the State Mill run that were running during the peak hours when we had only one bridge open, thus causing a real traffic problem, so he did discuss the issue with BNSF and the State Mill, and they agreed to try to work with us, therefore they will be included as a Stakeholder.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE FINAL DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR BRIDGE TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN BRIDGE CLOSURE OPERATIONAL STUDY.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF DRAFT NDDOT STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Haugen reported that he did alert everyone that the NDDOT is in the process of updating their transaction document, which is the Statewide Transportation Plan, and is called TransAction II. He added that notification was also distributed concerning several meetings that are being held during this timeframe, with one occurring this evening in Grand Forks. He stated that because those involved were going to be in Grand Forks for that meeting, he asked, and they graciously agreed to attend this afternoon's meeting to give a brief presentation on the Draft NDDOT Statewide Transportation Plan Update they are working on.

Haugen commented that the local newspaper did make mention of this meeting as being a meeting on the Merrifield Bridge issue. He explained that there has been a group of businesses and individuals, known and organized as the "South Forks Bypass Coalition", who are now trying to reinvigorate interest in this corridor/bridge issue, and they are the ones that released a press release trying to encourage people to attend this meeting to talk about the Merrifield Bridge, which is how the Grand Forks Herald came by the information.

Ben Ehreth, NDDOT, distributed copies of the Draft TransAction II document (copies of which are included in the file and available upon request), and gave a brief history on how the original plan, and update transpired.

Presentation/Overview ensued.

Ehreth stated that they will be available at this evening's meeting from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Townhouse to answer any questions regarding the document he just went over. He also distributed his mailing and e-mail address for those that aren't able to attend the meeting, but

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

may still have some questions or comments they would like addressed. He added that comments are needed by November 19th.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Ehreth asked if anyone had any comments or questions concerning the update.

Haugen asked where the Merrifield Bridge fits into this. Olson responded that that is a good question, as it is a local project that everyone here would like to have consideration. He stated that it would seem to fall under Initiative 2 – under the communication/collaboration issue, and whether or not there are opportunities for public and private partnership; Initiative 12 – environmental and social impacts, are there environmentally sensitive things that need to be considered, or are there any cultural resources to be considered. He pointed out that many of the initiatives overlap and touch each other, and are not clearly defined. He added that with something like this the DOT would like to see a commitment, or strong idea of what the community wants to do, so you have the opportunity to go through them, and Paul Benning, to see what can be done to accomplish it.

Haugen commented that the MPO is also updating their Long Range Transportation Plan, and asked if any of those planners present today had had the opportunity to review the progress that has been made so far. Olson responded that they had not. Haugen asked, since we are a bi-state organization, has NDDOT compared their draft here with what MNDOT has as their performance. Olson responded that they have looked at MNDOT's plan, and has a number of direct meetings with MNDOT. He added that when they did their update on their State Rail Plan, they contacted MNDOT and actually had a joint meeting with them on cross-border issues that were of interest to North Dakota regarding rail, so when they started on this plan they invited MNDOT to attend their session last April, but, unfortunately nobody was able to attend. He said that he has been in touch with freight offices, for example, and talked to them, and when they get the document done they will send MNDOT a copy, and request their comments and input, so the dialogue has begun, and mechanisms are being put in place to keep it going. He added that they are doing the same with Montana and South Dakota as well. Hampsten asked if they were also holding similar discussion with the Provinces. Olson responded that they are, and explained some of the things they are already doing, as well as things they are thinking about doing to accomplish this.

Haugen stated that he has a request, and a comment. He asked if they could briefly go over Appendix E, and then commented that there is a documented need for financing for our transportation system in North Dakota, and asked if there was any strategies or initiatives in this document that might lead them to believe that we are seeking more financing options. Olson responded that their situation is right now that they look at how much monies they will be receiving from the Federal Government, and they do share a lobbyist with five other states that watches things like the new highway bill, and from that they generate what they are need to look at in terms of additional dollars, and then appraise their legislative body of those needs, and they then have the option of either meeting those requirements or not, and so far they have always

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 11th, 2006**

chosen to take advantage of all the federal aid available to the state. He pointed out that North Dakota is a recipient state, which means we put less money into the Highway Trust Fund than we get back, so that has always been a very good deal for us. He state that they don't specifically recommend the types of funding mechanism we should go after, but rather let them know of some of the options out there, and let them determine which options they want to pursue.

Ehreth referred to Appendix E, and explained that it basically identifies procedures for revising this particular document. He stated that in the past they really didn't have a funding methodology, or system in place to revise this particular document, so, let's say there was a pressing need for a new initiative to be added or eliminated, they did not have any way of doing that so this appendix is outlining how this can be done.

Olson stated that this is a draft, so if anyone has any input, please get it to them by November 19th.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Reminder of 2008-2011 T.I.P. Project Solicitation

Haugen stated that he is just reminding everyone that all federal funding requests need to be submitted to the MPO by December 6th in order for the MPO Executive Policy Board to be able to take action on the requests, and then submit those requests to the DOT by December 15th. He said that Minnesota requests have until January to be submitted, so we have a little more time there.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 8TH, 2006, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:54 P.M..

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant