

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, August 9th, 2006 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy Ellis, in Chairman Earl Haugen's absence, called the August 9th, 2006, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:32 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 Senior Planner; Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Emily Hatfield, Grand Forks City Engineering; Richard Onstad, Grand Forks County Engineer; Kent Ehrenstrom, MNDOT-Bemidji; and Paul Benning (via conference call), NDDOT-Bismarck.

Staff present were: Nancy Ellis, MPO Senior Planner; Marissa Champion, MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, MPO Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 12TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE THE JULY 12TH, 2006, MINUTES OF THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF FINAL APPROVAL OF THE 2007-2010 T.I.P.

a. Public Hearing

Ellis opened the public hearing.

There was no one present for discussion.

Ellis closed the public hearing.

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b. Committee Action

Ellis reported that there haven't been any project changes since the April draft. She referred to Page 11, Table 2, and pointed out that there is a difference of about \$6,000.00 between the principal funding and the aggregate funding source for transit projects. She stated that Earl is aware of this, and will take the necessary steps to get it fixed. She then referred to Page 47, Appendix III, and explained that in the April draft this was labeled as Appendix IV, but what was previously under Appendix III has been pulled and made a stand-alone project.

Ehrenstrom referred to Page 32, and pointed out that East Grand Forks Paratransit Project #2 shows the funding source to be FTA 5307 funds. He stated that this project is actually fully funded by State monies, so it needs to be changed to reflect that. He added that this is also true for Projects #7, #10, and #13 as well.

Ehrenstrom referred to Page 37, and pointed out that East Grand Forks Project #12, which should actually be Project #15, is also labeled as being funded with FTA 5307 funds, but shouldn't be, so that should be removed as well.

Benning stated that once Earl makes the changes discussed, and the document is approved by the MPO Executive Policy Board, he would like three original copies of the final document.

Brooks referred to Page 38 and pointed out that project dates need to be changed from 2007-2009 to 2007-2010. Ellis added that there are several other typos that need to be addressed throughout the document as well.

MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY EHRENSTROM, TO GRANT FINAL APPROVAL OF THE 2007-2010 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO AMENDMENTS DISCUSSED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON GRAND FORKS DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

Brooks reported that a second open house was held on July 25th, however it was not very well attended. He stated that one of the biggest things they heard from the consultants was that we don't really have a parking problem in the downtown, in terms of available space, but instead we have a perception problem in terms of the location of that available space. He explained that what this means is that people may need to park further away from their destination than they would like, but the parking is there.

Brooks stated that the challenge now is to determine how to free up those spaces nearest the downtown businesses for both customer and employee parking. He said that the consultant has come up with some parking strategies for us to consider in order to accomplish this, and he did include seven of them in his staff report as follows: 1) Angle Parking; 2) Time Restrictions; 3) Permits; 4) Parking Allocations; 5) Parking Fees; 6) Enforcement; and 7) Signage. He stated that

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he would welcome any feedback on these options. Noehre commented that he feels all seven of these strategies have merit, and definitely should be looked at further, including some various combinations. Brooks stated that he agrees, but obviously some of them have more costs involved than others, such as parking fees, which would entail someone having to collect the fees; and enforcement, which would involve the police department; etc., which all needs to be taken into consideration, as well as trying to come up with some kind of funding mechanism to cover these additional costs as well.

Brooks commented that if we were to decide to go with angle parking, we would not recommend doing the entire downtown right away, but instead do a pilot area, possibly North 3rd, to see how it works. He added that you also should know that you don't really gain as many spots as you might think, maybe nine to ten additional spots, using angle parking.

Benning reported that the consultants contacted him about the possibility of using angle parking, and he did give them some input. He explained that ASHTO guidelines give the pros and cons of using diagonal parking, which he went over with the consultant. He stated that some of the cons include vehicle size differences, such as a Geo Metro parking next to a large SUV, which causes site issues; safety issues, such as backing into traffic, including bike/pedestrian traffic; and increases in accidents. He added that the issue of inconsistency, such as having angle parking in some areas but not in others, might also be a problem in that people wouldn't be expecting vehicles to back up into traffic if it isn't done uniformly throughout the downtown area.

Brooks stated that there are slides available for review on the MPO's Website that discusses the issue of angle parking in more depth than he has done today. He added that they discuss the difference between driving in and backing in, which seems to be the safer method.

Discussion ensued on back-in angle parking versus drive-in angle parking, with the consensus being that back-in angle parking should be explored as an option. Brooks stated that examples of Cities using this method is included in the presentation.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSIT PLAN

Champion gave a brief update on what the Stakeholder Group has been doing to develop a Human Services Coordinated Transit Plan. She stated that they have received a little more direction on what the plan should entail, but haven't yet received the final guidance, so they have been following the Minnesota model plan.

Champion stated that they held an open house, at which they asked the public for comments/input on the list of priorities the Stakeholder Group developed for improvement of transit, as well as any others they would like to see included in the plan as well. She stated that copies of the comments received were included in the packets.

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Champion reported that a fourth Stakeholder Group meeting was also held a week ago. She said that she had hoped to have a draft document ready for that meeting, but because she has yet to receive the guidelines, that did not occur. She stated, instead, that a copy of what is currently available was distributed, and a request made that each Stakeholder look the information over, and give her more direction on what they would like to see included in the plan. She said that this document is available on the MPO's Website, if anyone is interested in looking at what is currently available. She added that she does plan on having a final draft document available at the September Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

Champion commented that the Stakeholder Group will be meeting again on September 7th, at which time they will be discussing what sort of projects we should be applying for, both in Minnesota and North Dakota. She added that the Stakeholder Group consists of not only transit operators, but advocates of the three clientele using the transit system the most – low income, disabled, and elderly; job service; economic development corporation; etc.. Ehrenstrom asked if a list of Stakeholders was available on-line. Champion responded it was not, but that she would add it to the web-site.

Ehrenstrom stated that outside of the MPO area the Regional Development Commissions are doing the planning, and are just now starting to really get into this, and will be following the Minnesota guidelines as well. Champion commented that as far as the North Dakota side, and she doesn't know how much information there is in terms of the competitive process on the Minnesota side, but she did attend a meeting with the NDDOT to try to formulate some sort of distribution process, looking to make the 2006 and 2007 funds available on January 1st to apply for. She said, however, that Bismarck suggested they weren't ready to apply for such funds, and that they wouldn't be able to get the local match at this time; but Fargo is ready to go; so the North Dakota Transit Department told us to come up with the projects we feel we want to apply for funding for, and for which we can come up with the local match, and they will work with us to determine if they can be funded. She stated that although she did not include the amount of funding available for these projects in the packet, and it isn't a huge amount of money, it is a pot of funds available for the small urban and rural areas for the three grant programs, so it is really about how much we can get out of it versus the rest just going to Fargo.

Information only.

**MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON ISSUES CONCERNING STREET/HIGHWAY PLAN
UPDATE**

Ellis commented that Earl did discuss this issue at the last Technical Advisory Committee, and a special Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held on July 19th. She referred to copies of a memorandum from URS, the consultant hired to perform the update, and explained that it is a brief summary of that meeting. She pointed out that on page two of the memorandum, the consultant asks for names of additional civic groups and bodies that should be included in the outreach/involvement effort for this plan; and for additional issues that may not have been addressed in the previous plan.

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Ellis reported that another Long Range Transportation Plan Update meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 23rd, at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room A102. She referred to the second memorandum from URS, included in the packet, and pointed out that it lists the seven goals and objectives included in the 2004 Long Range Transportation Plan, and asks for further input/comments. She then referred to the second map, and explained that it actually shows what was discussed at the July 19th meeting. She explained that URS pulled out a large map at that meeting, and discussion was held on areas of concern for transportation issues, and all of those areas are listed on this map. She added that the third map is to be used for any additional issues anyone might feel should be included, beyond those shown on the second map. She said that anyone having anything they would like included could give it to Earl or the consultant either prior to, or at the meeting on the 23rd.

Ellis added that a public information meeting will also be held on August 23rd, at 5:45 to 7:30 p.m. at the Alerus, with a presentation at 6:00 p.m..

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. 2007-2008 MPO Annual Unified Work Program

Ellis reported that Earl asked that she mention that the 2007-2008 MPO Annual Unified Work Program will soon need to be completed, so everyone needs to start thinking about projects they would like to see included. She stated that because most of our big updates have already been completed, or are in the process of being completed, there should be ample funding available for more studies, so please start thinking of things you would like to see studied.

2. New MNDOT Representative

Ehrenstrom reported that MNDOT has hired Jim Bittman as a Planner for District 2. He explained that Mr. Bittman would be replacing J.T. Anderson on the Technical Advisory Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO ADJOURN THE AUGUST 9TH,
2006, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 1:18 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant