

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13th, 2007 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the June 13th, 2007, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:33 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: James Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji; Dean Wieland, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; John Thompson, Grand Forks Assistant City Engineer; Jane Williams, Grand Forks Traffic Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Charles Durrenberger (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planner, Senior; Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck; and Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks.

Guests present were: Jason Carbee, URS.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, MPO Executive Director; David Hampsten, MPO Senior Planner; Lucas Rengstorf, GF/EGF MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, MPO Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Haugen reported that Roger Foster, Transportation Superintendent, has submitted his resignation, and that his last day will be June 30th. He explained that, as in the past, staff is requesting approval from the committee to draft a letter of appreciation to Mr. Foster for all of the help and expertise he offered the Technical Advisory Committee during his tenure with the City of Grand Forks.

MOVED BY WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE STAFF DRAFT A LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO ROGER FOSTER.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE MAY 9TH, 2007 MINUTES

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE THE MAY 9TH, 2007,
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NDDOT
TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

Haugen reported that Ben Kubischta sent an e-mail requesting that the Technical Advisory Committee discuss proposed changes to the Transportation Enhancement program for North Dakota. He referred to copies of the staff report, and explained that it indicates that some of the members of the Task Force questioned projects that were being funded from the rural funding source that were adjacent to, or contiguous with larger metropolitan cities, so they are asking that these types of projects compete for the urban funding source rather than the rural funding source in the future.

Haugen referred to a draft letter from Mr. Kubischta, and pointed out that he has listed four alternatives for consideration. He asked that Mr. Benning give a brief presentation on these alternatives.

Benning stated that the results of this will be submitted to Francis Ziegler, their director, for a final decision. He said, therefore they are asking the three MPOs to review these alternatives, and submit their choice to Mr. Kubischta.

Haugen asked how they would do the population per square mile alternative, what data they would be using. Benning responded that he would check into it, but that their 2000 census data would have the density per square mile, so it may be something like that.

Haugen commented that he included copies of all of the rural projects that have been prioritized, and awarded funds, in the packet. He asked if this might be more of a perceived issue than a real issue. He explained that if you look at the projects, out of all of the rural projects it doesn't appear, at least to him, that there is a lot of money going to those projects adjacent to rural centers. Benning responded that there are two programs, the rural program and the urban program, and the urban program gets about \$1,000,000 per year for projects, and about half that for the rural program. He explained that they get between 15 and 20 applications each year for both. Noehre added that it is just a matter of determining which pot the monies will come from in order to be able to determine who provides the local match, correct. Benning responded that that would be correct, adding that another issue would be determining who would be providing the maintenance once the trail is constructed.

Noehre cited an example for Alternative B, extraterritorial zoning limits, in that if the Grand Forks County wanted a T.E. project three and a half miles from Grand Forks, then Grand Forks

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would have to provide the local match. Hampsten commented, however, that the project would not be within Grand Forks' jurisdiction, and if the City of Grand Forks isn't being directly served, why would the City provide the local match. He asked, if you have a bikepath going from the city limits of Grand Forks, out into the extraterritorial area, why would the City provide the local match for the bikepath. Benning responded that he would think it would be the county that would provide the local match. Noehre commented, however, that the funding would come out of the urban funding source. Haugen stated that this type of scenario is exactly why, by sitting on the Task Force when this was discussed, that he asked that they consider adding to the urban program, but the Task Force didn't go along with that request.

Haugen asked, again, if this is really a perceived issue or a real issue, and by looking at the table, he would ask if we are addressing something that isn't real. Williams asked what prompted this request in the first place. Haugen responded that when you look at the table, from 2004 to 2007 Morton County got it's two projects, which are basically adjacent to Mandan, and Burleigh County got it's two projects as well. Hampsten pointed out that there are a few projects near Fargo and Minot. Williams asked if anyone else has applied. Haugen responded that all he had available was this current 2008 award table, and, as you can see, Morton County applied for funds for Phase 3 of a project for which they were awarded funds for the first two phases, however they did not receive the funds for the third phase this year. He added, however, that there doesn't seem to be a lot of these projects other than those near Bismarck and Mandan, but out of the total projects awarded in the rural program, there has been only a small fraction of the monies awarded, so he doesn't know if we are trying to address something that is a perceived issue rather than a real issue or not. Benning responded that he thinks it is a little of both, and when you look at the first page of the letter, although Bismarck is cited, all three MPOs have areas where bike trails are developed outside their corporal limits, and are funded from the rural account, however, even though these are rural areas, such as Burleigh County, the members of the Director's Task Force feel these are urban communities, and are part of the City, not a rural community, and that is why he feels it is a little of both.

Noehre asked who submitted the applications, the City or the County. Benning responded that the County submitted that application for the Bismarck project cited in the letter. Durrenberger asked if in the past both allocations had been exceeded. Benning responded that they had. He explained that both the urban and rural pots of monies typically get around 15 to 20 applications, and they only get about \$1,000,000 in urban funds so they can only fund about 6 projects, with a dollar value of \$125,000 to \$150,000; and on the rural end they get about \$500,000, and again only pick about 5 or 6 projects, but with a dollar value of only \$75,000 to \$100,000.

Williams asked if they had ever had it set up so that whoever submits the application pays the local match. Haugen responded that on the urban account it is basically the 13 urban cities that cover the local match, but on the rural account, it is the County that submits the application, but most likely they will have an agreement with the local community that the local match will come from them. Williams stated, then, that things are basically done as stated in Alternative A at this time. Haugen responded that that would be correct.

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Durrenberger asked what Bismarck's extraterritorial boundary was. Haugen responded that it is four-miles. Durrenberger stated, then, that it is the same as Grand Forks and Fargo's. Haugen responded that in actuality, Fargo does not have a four-mile extraterritorial boundary, that they did, but have since annexed a lot of the area, and did not automatically extend their boundary once that was done. He added that this brings up the question of Alternative "B", and the fact that we need to be very familiar with what the Century Code states: "4047.01.1 versus 4047.01.1.2". Durrenberger asked if they changed the extraterritorial boundary from four back to two during the last legislature. Haugen responded that they did, but that it has a sunset clause stating that it will only be in existence for two years, and during the interim the council is supposed to study the issue, and hopefully have an answer by the next Legislative session have an answer.

Haugen reported that he suggested an Alternative "E", in which involved using the adjusted federal urban aid boundary, but the suggestion was not included on Mr. Kubischta's list.

Bittman asked what the MPO's boundary is. Haugen responded that it isn't quite four miles, but does go to the Airport Road to the west, the Merrifield Road to the south, and the Washington Interchange to the north.

Haugen commented that Grand Forks has never submitted an application for a project that is outside the City, but adjacent to the City, however there has been some discussion on such a project for the future. He reiterated that he had suggested another alternative that would involve using the Urban Aid Boundary, and adding more funds, but it was not included as an alternative, and he doesn't know if this is a real or perceived problem, but his analysis would say that it is a perceived problem, and Alternative A would be the alternative he would suggest. He asked if Mr. Kubischta would like for the Technical Advisory Committee to submit a recommendation to the MPO Executive Board, who, in-turn, would send a letter stating it's choice of alternative. Benning responded that it is his understanding that Mr. Kubischta would like a letter of recommendation sent to him.

Hampsten asked if the allocation of funds was roughly proportional to the population between the 13 urbanized centers and the rest of the state. Haugen responded that the T.E. split is based on the share the urban areas get of the total program, 16.557%. and the counties get 8.44%. Hampsten asked if the other urban centers have a lot of bedroom communities, unincorporated urban areas. Benning responded that you essentially have four of the 13 centers seeing growth, a portion holding their own, and some losing population. Hampsten stated that the reason he asked that is because, taking Grand Forks for example, he hasn't seen much of the bedroom community, or urban fringe problems, and he was wondering if that is an issue for Fargo or Bismarck. Haugen expounded by citing the City of Horace, which is not within Fargo's corporate limits, but is contiguous to Fargo, and how a project submitted by them would be handled.

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Bittman commented that he doesn't understand why the MPOs are being asked to submit recommendations on these alternatives, as by doing so they would only be allowing more projects for which they would be competing against for funds.

MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY WILLIAMS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY RECOMMEND AN ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVE; ALTERNATIVE "E", WHICH WOULD INVOLVE USING THE ADJUSTED FEDERAL URBAN AID BOUNDARY BE CONSIDERED, HOWEVER SHOULD IT PROVE NONFEASIBLE TO INCLUDE ALTERNATIVE "E", ALTERNATIVE "A" WOULD THEN BE THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

MOTION CARRIED WITH BENNING VOTING NAY.

MATTER OF PRESENTATION ON STREET AND HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that there are three memorandums included in it. He explained that today is kind of an educational session to try to get everyone better prepared for the special meeting next Wednesday at 9:00 a.m., at which they will be looking at further narrowing down the list of improvements for the recommended plan.

Jason Carbee was present for a brief presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request).

Presentation ensued.

Carbee explained that the ultimate goals next week are to receive active participation from the Technical Advisory Committee members to narrow the list of improvements for each issue/deficiency, to prioritize which issues/projects are addressed/included in the plan (funding contingent); and to compile a project list.

Carbee stated that essentially they have now gotten rid of everything that wasn't feasible, had some fatal flaws, and wasn't consistent with community values, goals and objectives. He referred to Table 1, Page 3, and went over some of those projects that were discarded after the first phase.

Carbee commented that Table 2 (broken up into several separate sheets) are those projects that have been retained, and which will be moved on to the second phase. He stated that they will now go through a prioritization exercise that will help them focus on how well they are meeting their goals and objectives. He said that this goes back to the evaluation criteria they used that relates to some of the standards they came up with last fall, and each of the evaluation criteria listed are what they went through and associated a score with for each of the projects.

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Carbee referred to the slides of the Columbia Road Corridor Congestion Project, and explained that he would like to use this project as an example on how the screening process worked. He then pointed out which alternatives were retained, and which were discarded, and why.

Carbee referred to the prioritization scoring slide, and went over how the scoring process works.

Hampsten commented that he is a little concerned, referring to Table 1, that they used high cost and impacts as a major reason for eliminating several of the projects, when on their matrix cost is one of numerous other valuator, so his question is whether or not they are going to weight anything. He explained that, for instance, cost seems to be a rather vital item, and is actually fatal to some of the projects, so why, on the matrix, don't you give cost a higher weight. Williams pointed out that cost has the same weight as multi-modal support, and in her mind that isn't the same weight at all. Carbee responded that, obviously cost is going to come into account in this workshop as they go through how much each project costs, and then they see how much budget they have. Hampsten agreed, but pointed out that even on the initial screening cost carries incredible weight, which is appropriate, but you haven't really reflected it on the worksheet.

Williams suggested that the categories themselves should have a weight given to them. Carbee said, then, that what you are suggesting is that it can still be a 2 through 6 but that they should put a multiplier of 2 at the top of the cost. Williams agreed that that would work. Hampsten pointed out that some of the projects should actually have a negative weight for cost, which would decrease the score.

Discussion on cost/weight ensued.

Hampsten said that he doesn't think that Mr. Carbee understands about the weight. Noehre responded that he thinks Mr. Carbee does understand. He explained that, as he understands this, you are going to use these values to come up with a score, stack them up and put dollar values to them, and then we are really going to study cost. Carbee agreed, adding that just because they score a project to be the highest priority doesn't mean it is in the plan, this is just a guide.

Hampsten commented the realizes they are taking qualitative data, and trying to quantify it, and he knows how hard that is, but some of the data is quantifiable, and he thinks cost is the most prominent. Carbee agreed, and asked if he was saying that they should take the actual dollar value and somehow come up with a score. Benning stated that you can quantify the dollar value for the project, but you can't quantify the dollar for the next two highway bills. Williams agreed, adding that if you do that none of the major projects would ever get built. Hampsten said, however, that they are all relative to one another, right. Williams disagreed. Benning cited the example of a \$45,000,000 West Fargo Main Avenue project that is more appealing than a \$2,000,000 project in a different area, so while the cost of the one is higher than the other, it is the better project. Hampsten agreed, but added that each project has a different impact, and what he is saying is that you would take the cost, and you would take the impact of the project, and if that project is going to cost most of your budget will it really be more beneficial than doing a

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bunch of lower cost projects. Everyone agreed that it could. Hampsten said, then, that this still needs to be factored in, and this doesn't quite do that. Carbee suggested that maybe he could come up with a different scoring scenario for next week. Hampsten stated that he would just simply go through what was done for the elimination process, determine why the projects were eliminated, and start weighting the remaining projects based on that.

Williams stated that what they were talking about is, you basically have fourteen items that are important to a certain degree, and you look at that as being 100% of the pie, and then start figuring out which is most important, which is least important, and giving each a percentage, you could then use those numbers we come up with and multiply it by your percentage, and the numbers will fall out. Bittman commented that, ultimately, you need to have a different max score for each project.

Benning asked if operations and maintenance should be under engineering. Carbee responded it should. He added that cost should also be under engineering as well.

Hampsten stated that the only other thing he needs to point out is, for instance under operations and maintenance you go from zero to two, with no fours and no sixes, and this is the case elsewhere as well, so he would suggest more of a range. Carbee agreed, but noted that most of the projects won't significantly impact the VMT or VHT, which is why they did that.

Carbee asked that over the next few days, if anyone has any specific suggestions regarding the definitions and scoring, please let either Earl or himself know. He stated that his thought is that he will come prepared next week, with Bill Troe, and have a scenario that weights, and if you want, they can create a spreadsheet to re-weight the projects by multiplying public support, safety, congestion, and cost by two, although you need to remember that the desired project(s) don't have to have the highest score. He added that next week they plan to have cost estimates available for each of the projects, and some preliminary engineering information for the interchange concepts at DeMers as well.

Carbee reported that there were a couple of other issues brought up as well, including having a pot of money available that is anticipated will be needed for expansion projects over the next twenty-eight years. He added that they need to consider the current T.I.P. monies programmed for expansion, but also need to add some county funding as well. He stated that the bottom line is that the two pots we will have room to play with are the \$108,000,000 on the North Dakota side, and the \$24,600,000 on the Minnesota side. Haugen pointed out, however, that we need to remember that those numbers could be reduced, so don't be surprised if it is shown to be \$105,000,000 or something next time you see it.

Wieland asked how they arrived at these figures. Haugen responded that he did include a memorandum in the packet that illustrates historical projects that were awarded funds in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, so they used those dollar amounts, added to the years, and came up with these figures. Carbee added that they basically arrived at these figures through a historical analysis of what the MPO programmed, and splitting up the rehab/reconstruction projects that

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aren't usually considered, separating them out, then taking the expansion dollars spent, and coming up with a timeline. Haugen stated that the figures all reflect 2007 dollar amounts.

Noehre asked if, when figuring the funding split, did you look at the difference between urban and regional funding, or just federal funding. Carbee responded that they basically used what the MPO used in their T.I.P. documents since 1993 for Minnesota, and 1995 for North Dakota. Haugen added that all of the projects are listed, and, referring to Table 3, pointed out that it lists the funding sources; federal, state, and local for each project, and then is split out by expansion versus rehab versus enhancement; and then it shows how it is adjusted for 2007. Williams asked if any of the averages affected by the monies we got for the flood. Haugen responded that they don't.

Carbee reported that after next weeks workshop they will be looking at cost versus funding – refining it using any additional feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee, and then coming up with the short term, mid-term, and long-term phasing in of the project costs.

Williams referred to Table 2, Project 3G, 32nd Avenue – I-29 to Washington Street 7-lane widening project, and pointed out that on the sheet she has, for 2035 she has an ADT of 16,000 to the east of Columbia. Carbee responded that that is why it states either Washington Street or Columbia Road, and, correct him if he is wrong, but the last plan showed this project as being widened to 7-lanes all the way to Washington, and this is essentially perpetuating the project that was in the last plan. Haugen commented that the traffic volume map does not reflect a 32nd Avenue Bridge, which would add traffic to this corridor. Carbee stated that, and he isn't trying to lead the committee to a decision, but he doesn't think we are in the 7-lane territory even with a 32nd Avenue Bridge. He added that they might be on the other side of Columbia, but east of there they aren't.

Williams referred to Project 5A, 24th Avenue/34th Street Roundabout, and asked if it wasn't supposed to be removed. Haugen responded that there was a Roundabout suggested at 24th Avenue and 29th Street, which was discarded, but this one is still being considered.

Williams referred to Projects 11A and 12A, Implement speed enforcement projects along Belmont Road and 4th Avenue South corridors, and asked what they entail. Carbee responded that there are various things that can be done. He explained that these two projects came up as an issue related to through traffic in neighborhoods. Williams asked if these were system improvements, and if so should they be included on this list or should they be addressed elsewhere in the program. Carbee asked if she is asking if they should even be included in the transportation plan. Williams responded that that is what she is asking, that it should be written in the plan someplace, but should it be included on the list. Carbee responded that system management, in this case involves improvement of what is currently there, so, in this case it maybe shouldn't be included, but that is a local decision.

Thompson referred to Project 10A, Signalize 36th Avenue South and Columbia Road Intersection, and suggested that this maybe should remain a ¾ access intersection.

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Haugen asked if there are any projects that aren't listed that should be considered.

Williams referred to Table 3, Project 3F, I-29/32nd Avenue Interchange adding loop ramps, and asked when the counts were done for that, and were any event counts taken there as well, or did we use our regular average ADTs. Haugen responded that that was more of a non-engineering led solution.

Hampsten commented that, as the sole bike advocate here, he has to recommend, or at least try to recommend putting in bike lanes on any collector, or higher road, that doesn't have parking on it. He stated that he would like to see either bike lanes or road diets, which narrows the traffic lanes, put in for bicyclists and other mobility devices.

Discussion on bike lanes and safety issues ensued.

Haugen stated that he had one other issue he would like to address. He asked about the 42nd Street Grade Separation Project Concept Report, specifically if there was a cost estimate available for that project. He explained that they would like to use that cost estimate if possible rather than have URS come up with their own cost estimate. Thompson responded that they did meet about three weeks ago, and that he would get those figures to Mr. Haugen after the meeting. Haugen stated that they would also like to get the concept as well so they can reflect it in next weeks discussion in order to determine if we want to keep that project as a prioritized funded project, or make it an illustrative project instead.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Special Meetings

a. June 20th Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

Haugen asked if 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 20th meeting would work for the Technical Advisory Committee. Consensus was that it would.

b. June 21st Bridge Incident Management Meeting

Haugen reminded everyone that ATAC would be here on Wednesday, June 21st, at 1:30 p.m. to provide a training session for critical people on the Bridge Incident Management Plan. He added that there will also be discussion on the operational agreement as well.

2. Diagonal Parking

Benning asked that once a decision is made as to whether or not the City of Grand Forks is going to permanently allow parallel parking in the Downtown, and where, they let NDDOT know. Williams asked how they would like to be informed of this decision, and what information is

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needed. Benning responded that copies of the City Council minutes stating that they approve of parallel parking on specific streets would be sufficient.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY THOMPSON, SECONDED BY BITTMAN, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 13TH,
2007, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 3:05 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant