

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 14th, 2007 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the February 14th, 2007, 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: Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Brad Bail (Proxy for Dean Wieland), East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks City Planner; John Thompson, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck; and Kent Ehrenstrom, MNDOT-Bemidji.

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

Guests present were: Bill Troe, URS Corporation

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 10TH, 2007, MINUTES FOR THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY NOEHRE, SECONDED BY ELLIS, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 10TH, 2007, MINUTES FOR THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF 2007-2010 T.I.P. AMENDMENTS

- A. Public Hearing
- B. Committee Action

Haugen referred to the staff report, included in the packets, and pointed out that it identifies amendments to the year 2007 project list of the 2007-2010 T.I.P.. He stated that a public hearing notice was published for this time, and that a recommendation will be required from the

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Technical Advisory Committee to the MPO Executive Policy Board on whether or not to approve the amendments listed. He then went over each amendment briefly as follows:

North Dakota Project(s):

- 1) I29/DeMers On-Off Ramp Turning Radii Improvement – Haugen explained that district has some federal funds involved in increasing the turning radii of the I29/DeMers on-off ramp.

Minnesota Projects(s):

- 1) 13th Street S.E. – Haugen reported that this is not a new project, but does need to be amended due to funding issues. He explained that funding is being reduced from \$1.215 Million down to \$1.074 Million. He added that the federal funds are split between High Priority, at \$816,000; and Hazard Elimination Safety, at \$255,000; and that the local match will increase from \$285,000 to \$425,688.00.
- 2) Haugen stated that there is also a need to amend the FY2008 project list to include the US Business 2 mill and overlay, from the DeMers Avenue intersection to the US Business 2 intersection. He explained that there was some discussion held with MNDOT as to why we need to amend our current program to approve this since it is a FY2008 request, and we will be adopting a 2008-2011 T.I.P. and S.T.I.P., but we were told that they want it shown in our current T.I.P.. He reported that no federal funds are involved as it will be funded entirely with State Highway monies.

Haugen opened the public hearing.

There was no one in the audience for comment. Haugen explained that the public hearing notice also allowed for comments to be submitted to staff by 12:00 Noon today, however, none were received.

Haugen closed the public hearing.

Benning referred to the first amendment, and reported that he did talk to NDDOT's Planning Division, and was told that it would be covered under a line item in their S.T.I.P. as maintenance. He requested that copies of the amendment be forwarded to him for inclusion in the S.T.I.P. once the MPO Executive Policy Board approves it. Haugen referred to a copy of a letter, which, once the MPO Executive Policy Boards approves these amendments, will be put on letterhead and distributed to appropriate personnel, as has been done in the past.

Haugen referred to the 13th Street S.E. project, and explained that, as most people know, when High Priority projects are funded, they are funded at a fifth of the five years of SAFETEA-LU, so in 2008 and 2009 we will now show in our T.I.P. a project of prepayment of advanced

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construction for this, so for each year we will show a cost of \$163,000 of federal funds as payback for the HPP project.

MOVED BY GENGLER, SECONDED BY BENNING, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE AMENDMENT #1 TO THE FY 2007-2010 T.I.P. AMENDMENT.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Haugen reported that there will also be a need for a T.I.P. amendment at the March meeting as well. He stated that, depending on what happens with the enhancement feature on 55th Street, which will be constructed this year, we will need to amend our T.I.P. to bring it in to our 2007 project list.

Haugen commented that staff was also notified that Grand Forks will be receiving some JARC and New Freedom funds, therefore we will also need to approve an amendment to reflect those monies as well.

**MATTER OF DRAFT RFP FOR EAST GRAND FORKS CENTRAL AVENUE
CORRIDOR STUDY**

Ellis reported that she prepared a draft Request for Proposal for a study the MPO will be conducting this year for the City of East Grand Forks. She explained that the study will entail looking at Central Avenue, or Minnesota Highway 220 North, to evaluate the traffic operations, document current aesthetics within the corridor, provide alternative enhancements/streetscaping, and ultimately determine how it can be made more attractive.

Ellis stated that because this is her first RFP, she would like to hold some discussion on selection criteria, specifically how to determine if a local preference should be included as part of the criteria. She explained that currently proposers are given an additional 5% to their raw score based on their close location or proximity to the study, however, location definitions include most, if not all consultants in the area, therefore, she was wondering if the 5% might be best appropriate to another criteria, such as willingness to meet time and budget requirements. Haugen pointed out that he did include a copy of the Federal Highway's guidance on whether or not location can be used as a factor.

Ellis asked what everyone's feeling's were on whether or not to include location as a criteria for this project. Benning responded that there are seven criteria, that at least four of those criteria have to be used for the selection process, and he would leave location in.

Discussion on language clarification ensued.

Ellis stated that there was also discussion held on possibly putting more specific dates in the proposal as well. She explained that she did put in a final draft deadline, but feels that there is a

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good possibility that by confining firms to a certain date you can end up rushing them, and you may end up with an inferior product. Benning agreed that using tentative timelines might be best.

***MOVED BY THOMPSON, SECONDED BY EHRENSTROM, TO APPROVE
FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
TO APPROVE THE CENTRAL AVENUE IMPROVEMENT STUDY RFP.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF STREET/HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE

Haugen reported that Bill Troe, URS Corporation, is here today to give a brief update on the Street/Highway Plan Update. He referred to copies of technical memorandums that were included in the packets, and explained that the first discusses how a financial plan will be developed; and the second outlines how alternatives will be analyzed and screened, and how the process will assist in determining the recommended alternatives.

Bill Troe, URS Corporation, gave a brief power point presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request).

Presentation ensued.

DISCUSSION/COMMENTS:

Noehre stated that NDDOT has data for all the regional projects that have been done within the MPO area, so he wouldn't think it would be very difficult to the 1990s. Benning said that they can go back and print out data back to 1996, and if they actually want to go back to 1992, they could probably just look at the agreements made prior to 1996. Troe commented that he thinks it would be interesting to go back to at least 1996 and look at the volatility, and if we see a consistent low or a consistent high over a three- or four-year cycle, we can be pretty confident that we have seen the low of the lows and the high of the high, which would indicate that there wouldn't be a need to go back any further.

Benning reported that back in 1992, two things occurred, ISTEA kicked-in, and the Regional and Urban programs were developed.

Benning asked what URS uses for a discount rate. He stated that NDDOT uses about a 4% rate, adding that they do a cost comparison between asphalt and concrete, and to bring it to present value they use a 4% discount rate. Troe responded that that is about what they use as well.

Haugen asked if Mr. Troe was asking the Technical Advisory Committee to give him guidance as to which of the three funding alternatives he should use. Troe responded that he would propose using the first alternative, so what he is asking is whether this body agrees or not.

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Hampsten asked, if they have falling federal revenues, would that impact the projections. Troe responded that it would depend on which methodology is used. He added, however, that he doesn't think it would impact whether or not Federal Highway would approve the MPO's Transportation Plan because he doesn't think Federal Highway can even tell us what is going to happen. Benning commented that what Federal Highway really does it to look to make sure you do this every five years.

Noehre asked if this step has been done in the past. Haugen responded that it has, that they have been doing the historical portion, and have looked at past expenditures to come up with an average annual year of expenditures from the different sources which they then predict out twenty years. Noehre stated that he doesn't remember doing this last time. Haugen responded that it may not have been done as a full technical advisory committee.

Troe stated that he would like to talk a little about where we go from here. He stated that on Monday they received the 2035 base network forecast from A.T.A.C., and will be looking at that data over the next month in order to come up with the operations analysis associated with traffic. He added that beginning in March they will start walking through the alternatives analysis in order to develop universe of alternatives, and will complete Phase 1 screening between March and April and Phase 2 screening between April and May. He stated that at that time they will then begin working on the cost estimates, will make recommendations by May or June, and have a final document for approval by July.

Haugen referred to the second technical memo, page 3, and pointed out that we have already asked them to test some of the alternative improvements that are in our current plan, so they have not only taken our 2035 and forecast how traffic would be like if we are only doing our existing plus committee projects, but also are already testing some of the alternatives that we have listed in our current plan as recommended improvements in the future. He stated that, if you will recall some of our earlier discussions, we are not looking at dreaming up a whole bunch of new alternatives, but want to take our current plan alternatives and make sure they are still viable projects, from both a traffic and cost standpoint.

Information only.

MATTER OF DRAFT ANNUAL LISTING

Haugen stated that at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting he mentioned that SAFETEA-LU is now asking for an annual listing of obligation, and while this has been done in the past via our T.I.P. document, it is now more specific. He added that because the T.I.P. document is approved in the fall it creates some problems as the projects for the current year are still open, thus we don't actually know what is obligated towards the final cost of the projects, therefore, staff decided that we would separate this from the T.I.P. document and bring it forward as a stand-alone document within the first three months of the new calendar year.

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Haugen commented that we are also supposed to be doing the annual listing in a format that is similar to our T.I.P. document, which he has included in the packet. He referred to the tables and went over them briefly.

Thompson reported that he has noticed that a lot of the City of Grand Forks' projects get to be a lot more than 20% or 30% local funding over federal, and he was wondering if there would be a problem with them trying to get all of the costs participating, and do preliminary and construction engineering qualify for federal funds. Benning responded that preliminary engineering does qualify, but the caveat to that is that NDDOT does a preliminary engineering agreement prior to doing the environmental document, at which time they lock in a price. Thompson asked if it was locked in under a "do not exceed this amount" kind of scenario. Benning responded it was. He added, however, that they discourage this because we typically don't know the cost, and it has caused some problems in the past. Thompson asked if there would be a penalty assessed if you don't use all of the funding requested. Benning responded that the funds just go back into the pool, but that is why they discourage it.

Haugen stated that he hopes to have a final version of the tables available for approval in March.

Noehre commented that you could give some of your percentages to some of the non-participating things. Benning reported that they do have a local government manual, in which it clearly identifies what is eligible and what isn't under the Urban Roads Program.

Thompson explained that he has seen a lot of these projects come through, and you have your basic paving, lighting and stormsewer, but then you have trees, bikepaths, wider sidewalks, fancier lighting, better signs, better pavement marking, and if you put them all as alternates in the project, and the project comes in after design, or after bidding too high, then you just start removing some of those alternatives to cut costs. He asked if that would be acceptable or not. Benning responded that they just did something like that for a project in Bismarck. Noehre stated that they would have to bid those things as alternates. Benning added that you need to identify your construction termini before bidding, and you design your plans to reflect your Project Concept Report.

Information only.

MATTER OF NORTH DAKOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Benning reported that they are currently in the process of completing the applications and getting them out in the mail. He stated that they will have the brochures completed and disseminated to all entities prior to mailing out the applications. Haugen asked if copies of the brochures would be sent to the MPO as well. Benning responded he would get some to us as soon as possible. He added that they have also created a website on which both the brochures and applications will be available as well.

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OTHER BUSINESS

1. Transportation Enhancement Funds

Haugen asked if the Transportation Enhancement mailing has been sent out yet. Benning responded that he asked about this last week, and was told that there are two sets of letters being sent out, the no letters will be signed by the local government division, and the yes letters will be signed by the Governor. He stated that they did send copies of the no letters to the director of local government, but he has not yet signed off on them, but as soon as they are signed they will get them out in the mail, and will then get copies of the yes letters to the Governor as well.

Haugen asked if the County's letters had already been mailed out. He stated he asks this because he received a thank you note from a grantee, so he would assume they are out already. Benning stated that they must have just come out this week. Haugen responded that he received the thank you last week, so he asked City staff if they had received letters yet, and was told they hadn't.

2. East Grand Forks Application for JARC Funds

Ehrenstrom asked if East Grand Forks had applied for JARC funds. Hampsten responded that they hadn't. He explained that he was just talking earlier with someone from St. Paul, and they haven't even sent out the applications yet, but will be doing so at the end of February. He added that this application will be for 2006 and 2007 funding.

3. Mid-Years

Haugen reported that, per Mr. Benning's request, he did check to see if May 9th would work for everyone for Mid-Years, and found that it would work well.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY NOEHRE, SECONDED BY BENNING, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 14TH, 2007, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 3:32 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant