

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:36 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Wayde Swenson, NDDOT-Grand Forks; 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 (via conference call), NDDOT-Bismarck; Kent Ehrenstrom, MNDOT-Bemidji; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; and Jim Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, MPO Executive Director; David Hampsten, MPO Senior Planner; Lucas Rengstorf, MPO Intern; Jane Williams, Grand Forks Traffic Engineer; and Peggy McNelis, MPO Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Troy Schroeder, NWRDC; Jerry Skyberg, East Grand Forks City Building Inspector; Randy Gust, East Grand Forks Fire Chief; Jason Baker, NDSU-ATAC; Shawn Birst, NDSU-ATAC; Diomo Motuba, NDSU-ATAC; Michael Grundman, NDSU-ATAC; and Tim Paulus, Corps of Engineers St. Paul District.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Haugen asked that, because there are a few new people present, everyone please introduce themselves.

**REQUEST SPECIAL MEETING FOR END OF MARCH**

Haugen reported that Bill Troe, URS, and himself are requesting a special meeting at the end of March, the afternoon of Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, if possible. He explained that the reason for the request is to present our 2035 traffic forecasts, as well as to look at some of the recommendations included in our current plan to determine how they work with the 2035 forecast network.

After some discussion it was determined that the meeting would be set for Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, and that everyone please check their calendars to determine whether or not they will be able to attend.

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**APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2007, MINUTES FOR THE MPO TECHNICAL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY GENGLER, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>,  
2007, MINUTES FOR THE MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS  
SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF E.G.F. 2007 T.E. PROJECT**

Haugen referred to the staff report, included in the packets, and commented that this project was actually applied for in 2002, for FY2007 Transportation Enhancement funds. He referred to a map, and pointed out where the project is located, explaining that the original request was to construct an underpass, but due to rising construction costs it is now felt that an underpass is cost prohibitive, so during the preparation of the Technical Memorandum, Floan-Sanders looked at some other alternatives, and is now suggesting the use of in-place flashing lights. He stated that NWATP has asked that this new option be brought to the MPO Technical Advisory Committee for their assistance in getting the project approved, after which it will be presented back to the ATP for their concurrence by April 2<sup>nd</sup>. He added that once approval is received from the ATP the, Technical Memorandum can be signed and submitted by April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Boppre distributed copies of information on the in-place flashing lights option, and reported that two weeks ago he attended the East Grand Forks City Council's working session to see if they still wanted to continue with the underpass, which, again, has reached a cost of about \$300,000. He added that they actually also had some grade issues, so the underpass would have been about two-feet into the ground, and they would have had to do some storm sewer and grading as well, which also added to the size and cost of the project. He stated that after hearing this, the City Council asked them to take a look at some alternatives, and staff came up with the in-place flashing lights option, and feel it would work very well at this location. He said that he then took this information back to the City Council, and they all liked this option, as did the Street Superintendent.

Boppre then referred to the information he distributed, and explained how it works. He stated that they would replace the pavement in that area in order to install this system, at an estimated cost of \$50,000.00. He commented that on the Company's website they talk about a school in Alaska that put this in two years ago, and it states that they have not had any issues with snowplows, at least with that installation. He added that Lou Tasa, MNDOT, contacted him this morning, and said that he talked to people from Federal Highway, and they are somewhat excited about this system going in as there isn't one in the State of Minnesota at this time. He stated that they did caution that, should we put this in, we should get at least a three-year warranty with it. Bittman commented that he would agree that a three-year warranty would be wise, explaining that there have been some issues in other parts of the country where, because of the cost involved to replace them, they are not being replaced, so a warranty would help defray the some costs.

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Bittman reported that they did discuss the criteria required for funding of this type of system, and stated that the proposed location does meet most of those criteria. He explained that the criteria included: 1) locating the system in the middle of a street, away from any intersections, which this location meets; 2) locating it in a roadway that has between 5,000 and 30,000 vehicles traveling on it per day, and this location has about 4,800, which is just slightly below; 3) locating it in a roadway that has a travel speed of 35 miles an hour or less, which this location meets; and 4) locating it in a roadway that has a minimum of 100 pedestrians crossing per day, which this location does not meet, at least in the winter time. Haugen responded that in May of 2004 the MPO did a trail usage study of the metro-trails, and, although we didn't count this crossing, some of the other crossings, such as Bygland Road and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, which is where the floodwall is on the Point, had 105 people crossing during a 16-hour period. He added that at some other similar locations, such as the English Coulee and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, they counted 810 people; at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, north of UND, they counted 503; at the English Coulee and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue they counted 365; at the English Coulee and DeMers Avenue they counted 149; so that would indicate that there may be more than 100 pedestrians crossing at this location a day as well.

Ehrenstrom asked if they were looking at putting in a manually operated, or an automatic type of system. Boppre responded that he would like to do an automatic one. Hampsten asked if there would be warning signs up and down the street. Boppre responded that they would have advanced warning signs up and down the street. Haugen pointed out that there currently aren't any warning signs along this roadway.

Haugen reported that during his research on this system, he found that they do caution that over time people become desensitized to these types of systems, so they suggest that in addition to the pavement, the striping, and the signage; that some other things could be done, such as bulb-outs, raised cross-walks, refuge islands, or some other type of hard structure could be constructed in order to make it a more permanent indication that this is a crossing.

Haugen commented that Jim, Kent, and Troy were at the ATP meeting at which this issue was discussed, and it appears that the ATP is interested in getting a more firm estimate on the cost of this project, as well as what all is going to be done, and have that presented to them again so that they can concur with the application. He added that they are also looking for this Technical Advisory Committee to buy into the technology. Boppre stated that they are in a time-crunch, that they have completely revised the PM, which he has to send to Mr. Tasa tomorrow, and then they have to have plans, specs, and cost estimates to Mr. Tasa by April 9<sup>th</sup>, so they have four weeks to get all of this done. He said that he did tell Mr. Tasa last week that this isn't an issue, that they will get it done in whatever manner they need to. Haugen commented that the problem is that the ATP hasn't bought into this 100% yet, and that is why they are asking for this presentation today, and then for a more extensive concept of what is actually being proposed presented to them as well.

Further discussion on what information is being requested, and why it is being requested ensued. General consensus from the Technical Advisory Committee was to proceed forward with this new technology, and present with more details, at the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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**MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO TRANSIT SECTION OF ALTERNATIVE  
TRANSPORTATION MODES PLAN**

Haugen reported that back in December 2006, we presented this concept of amending our Alternative Transportation Modes Plan Transit Section to this body, at which time you did grant preliminary approval. He stated that it has since been submitted to both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks City Councils, and has been adopted by both entities into their City documents. He commented that the public hearings were held in December and January.

Haugen stated that they held off bringing it back to this body for final approval, and to the MPO Executive Policy Board until now because we were unsure of what 2007's funding would be. He said that they have since had Congress act on that in February, and are now asking for this body to forward a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board to adopt this amendment to our Alternative Transportation Mode Transit Section. He explained that this amendment does three things:

- 1) One of the requirements of SAFETEA-LU was to do a Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plan, which we did last year, and we are now incorporating into our Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 2) It allows us to incorporate some new funding sources that SAFETEA-LU created; JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) and New Freedom funds.
- 3) As part of the Human Service Coordination Plan we looked at some fixed-route changes that could occur, so we will be performing a Transit Route Study to determine if they should occur or not.

Haugen referred to the packets, and reported that a copy of the text from the document being amended was included. He added that Table 3.32 shows financial constraint issues, indicating that if we were to be awarded JARC funds, we are required to provide a 50% local match, so as we price this out we still maintain a positive balance for the public transportation system.

Haugen reiterated that this document has been approved by both Cities, and now needs final approval from the Technical Advisory Committee and the MPO Executive Policy Board.

Benning commented that Mr. Haugen is correct, that the President did sign-off on the 2007 funds in February, but they are currently waiting for the North Dakota Federal Highway office to tell them what North Dakota will receive. He said that they should get this information by the end of this week, after which they will forward that information on to the MPO.

Haugen stated that when we originally adopted this document, SAFETEA-LU had not yet been passed, so we are now updating the financial analysis, and are showing a 5% increase in the 5307 program for 2007, 2008, and 2009; and our understanding of the 2007 appropriation is that they funded this at the authorized level. He said that the House Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure published a table that showed North Dakota getting 5% more FTA dollars for the

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state, so based on the information accessible to us, it appears that we are able to sustain the expenditures we are forecasting in this mid-term update of our TDP.

Haugen commented that by adopting this into the MPO's Long Range Transportation plan, when the City's do decide to spend the JARC/New Freedom monies, they will already be included in our plan and T.I.P., and can be spent right away.

***MOVED BY THOMPSON, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODE PLAN – TRANSIT SECTION OF THE 2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF TRANSIT ROUTE STUDY SCOPE OF WORK**

Hampsten referred to the staff report and explained that this is a continuation of previous studies. He stated that in the 2004 Transportation Development Plan there were various recommendations that Routes 8 and 9 be tweaked, and that a study be done on how they can be used to serve other areas of the City, so we are now going to do a study to determine how we can serve the Industrial Park area, the Alerus Sports Complex and Canad Inn, as well as the new Aurora Medical Complex and South Middle School on the south end of the City.

Hampsten reported that they have put together a study outline to systematically look at these areas, as well as various demographic information that would also indicate where future bus routes might run. He added that we will also be looking at other options as well, including whether we should be looking at new buses, park and ride facilities, or other types of bus routes or transit services.

Hampsten stated that they will be talking to some of the businesses in the Industrial Park to determine what their needs and desires might be in regard to transit service, as well as whether or not they might be willing to help with the local match.

Hampsten commented that the purpose of the study is to determine transit needs, therefore we need to talk to various business owners in the areas being studied, with the providers, and also with the work force.

Hampsten reported that staff is doing quite a bit of demographic studies, looking at 2000 and 2005 Census Data. He added that they are also looking at land use patterns that are currently going on, and at future land use patterns for the next five years in order to have better data available to the stakeholders to utilize. He stated that they are also trying to re-evaluate and refine our goals and objectives of a potential new transit service. He said that once this is done we can list possible alternatives, although we do have a tentative list included in the outline

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which stem from the TDP, the Aurora Medial Complex was not included in the TDP, and that is one important change that needs to be updated.

Hampsten referred to the Gantt Chart included in the packets, and explained that it indicates a tentative timeline for completion of the study, as well as implementation of the findings. He pointed out that we are hoping to have the study completed by April 23<sup>rd</sup>, for an implementation date of June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Haugen reported that the only new bit of information, which staff became aware of just this morning, is that the Canad-Inn, the hotel portion, would be opening and rooms would be reserved and used by April 15<sup>th</sup>, and the water park would be opening two week later, but we are still hoping for some wiggle room so that we aren't forced to go with an earlier start date for service.

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY GENGLER, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE TRANSIT STUDY SCOPE OF WORK AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS**

Haugen reported that this is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU. He explained that it isn't a new requirement, but is instead an expansion of an existing requirement.

Haugen commented that in the past, in the appendix of our T.I.P., we would show the progress of our annual element projects, but instead of showing it in that manner we are now documenting that information in a separate document. He stated that one of the problems with showing this information in the T.I.P. appendix is that we approve our T.I.P. in the fall of the year in which the projects are taking place, therefore many of them were still in the process of being completed, so by creating a separate document to be done within the first three months of the calendar year, more projects will have been completed during the previous construction season.

Haugen referred to a copy of the draft Obligated Project list finalized by staff, with the assistance of the Technical Advisory Committee members, and explained that one of the requirements the feds have is that we try to mirror, replicate, or resemble the T.I.P., so we are showing not only what the T.I.P. showed, but what was actually spent on these projects in the same format used in the T.I.P..

Haugen commented that when you look through the listings, there was some movement in projects costs, and the intent of the document is to show policy makers, DOTs, federal agencies, and the general public what we program versus what was actually accomplished. He pointed out that there is still one project that he is still trying to get his arms around, and that is the Point Bridge project, which is a joint project between the Cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

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He referred to Grand Forks Project #5, and explained that he knows that Grand Forks spent \$853,000 in federal funds, but doesn't know if East Grand Forks spent \$325,000 or \$375,00 in federal funds.

Benning stated that once this is finalized, he would like three copies sent to him for dissemination.

Haugen said that staff would clean up the Point Bridge project to ensure it reflects the correct cost breakdown. He stated that other than that project, all others have been updated as best as possible from the information received. He pointed out that everything was delivered except for two projects; the North Dakota Transportation Enhancement project on 55<sup>th</sup>, the entrance feature that we are trying to get done this year; and some shelter improvements in East Grand Forks.

Haugen reported that another thing we are required to do is to make particular note as to whether bike/ped facilities are incorporated in a larger project, or are stand alone projects, so he tried to, in the remarks section, indicate that. He pointed out that for most projects, accommodations were made for bikes or peds within the project.

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BOPPRE, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL LISTING OF T.I.P. FY2006 OBLIGATED PROJECTS.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF MPO PLANNING REGULATIONS**

Haugen reported that there are new regulations for both the Statewide and MPO Planning. He stated that these rules are effective Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, and the discussion on today's packet provided a couple of documents that highlighted what the major changes are.

Haugen referred to the staff report and explained that the planning regulations had not changed since the adoption of ISTEA back in the early 1990s. He said that when TEA-21 was adopted it did some significant changes to the ISTEA law, in regard to planning, and the FTA and FHWA did propose some rule making, but at that time it was felt that those agencies were going out and beyond what TEA-21 language intended, so FTA and FHWA withdrew their proposed changes so we have been operating under a different US law, but were still trying to follow regulations from a previous law, so now with the adoption of SAFETEA-LU the regulations needed to be updated to reflect it's language versus ISTEA's language, and this is the result of that effort, and it does follow SAFETEA-LU quite closely.

Haugen reported that there is one thing that we are still trying to have clarified, and that is the fiscal constraint issue of the financial plan for our Long Range Transportation Plan. He stated that this is nothing new, as our plans have needed to be financially constrained for some time, but, if you will notice in the proposed rules, the deadline for TIPs and Plans to be SAFETEA-LU

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compliant stayed at July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the financial portion of the plan needs to be compliant by December 11<sup>th</sup>.

Haugen commented that one other additional requirement for the financial plans is that they use an inflation rate to reflect the year of expenditure dollars. He said that the question is what inflation rate should be used, particularly for the Plan. He stated, however, that there may be an “out” in that they may allow us to use cost ranges, or cost bands, which is nice, but the problem we currently have is that for the revenue side of this, all of the projections for the federal funding sources that we typically rely on are not very promising, and are, in-fact quite disheartening. He added that, in-fact, by the end of 2008 there will be less money coming in than going out, and if that trend continues we may not even have federal revenue to the current levels, which would mean that we would not have enough funding to meet costs.

Haugen pointed out that another possible “out” for us is cited in Federal Highway’s comments. He stated that originally when they said that July 1<sup>st</sup> was the deadline they said that they wouldn’t approve a T.I.P. unless it was SAFETEA-LU compliant, and in order for it to be SAFETEA-LU compliant your plan had to be SAFETEA-LU compliant, and now they are saying that they will approve a T.I.P. even though your plan may not be SAFETEA-LU compliant as long as you can show your are making progress. He added that there is still this December 11<sup>th</sup> issue on how we can update our financial plans with such a divergent forecast for what we have in terms of revenue streams versus costs coming into the system. He stated that this basically means that we can’t finance a lot of the things we want to finance, and also that we have to show how we are financing and maintaining our maintenance and operation program before we start doing other things.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Safe Routes To School NDDOT Schedule

Haugen stated that, with the Safe Routes to School Application due on April 10<sup>th</sup>, he put together a timeline as to what that means on the North Dakota side in order to get it approved by the local governing bodies so that we, as an MPO, can have time to review the application and submit to the NDDOT by their deadline.

**BREAK – 2:45 P.M.**

Haugen stated that there would be about a 15-minute break before this body would reconvene for a presentation/discussion on the Bridge Closure Study by A.T.A.C.

**RECONVENE – 3:00 P.M.**

Haugen reconvened the meeting at 3:00 p.m..

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**MATTER OF BRIDGE CLOSURE STUDY**

Haugen commented that everyone should have received an e-mail within the past couple of days identifying some of the material that A.T.A.C. personnel will be going over today.

Shawn Birst, A.T.A.C., was present for a brief power-point presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available for review).

Birst explained that the purpose of the study is to provide safe and efficient traffic flow during special events, with the main event being spring flooding, as well as any maintenance activities that could occur on the bridge structures themselves. He said that the Corps Flood Projects for both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks are intended to protect both cities, and this study will help determine how to accommodate traffic flow during various events that require closure of one or more bridges.

Birst stated that there are basically only two main agenda items, the first being action levels for closing/opening structures. He said that their findings are largely based on the Corps of Engineer's levels, but are tailored to suit the needs of this project. He added that the second item, traffic detour drawings, will be gone over briefly as well.

Presentation ensued.

Birst referred to Table 1, Bridge/Road Closure Action Levels, and went over it briefly. He explained that it is basically a summary of various plans they received, primarily from the Corps of Engineers, the City of Grand Forks, and Floan-Sanders. He stated that what they did was to take the lowest value for closure, and using that information as their trigger event because you can't close part of a bridge. He pointed out that he bolded the core bridges for their study, and explained that they did use some approximate values as they weren't able to finalize some of the information, but overall the values shown are pretty solid.

Birst went on to give an overview of the action levels, pointing out there are two; Action 1 and Action 2, and explaining that we can typically expect three to four days between Action 1 and Action 2, when the structure is actually closed. He stated that Action 2 is based off of the bridge sill elevation, and there is a three to four foot difference that allows us three to four days to close the structure should the river rise about a foot a day.

Birst referred to the Point Bridge information, and commented that they had values that suggested that the bridge should be closed at 46.4 to 45.745, but in reality it should be closed at a lot lower elevation because, initial values are for the bridge, but actually the approach to the bridge becomes flooded first, so that is why there is a significant difference. He stated, however, that the other bridges don't have that variation between the different plans.

Birst pointed out that the Point Bridge shows a closure elevation of 40-feet. He asked if that was still a pretty good estimate to use, or should it be adjusted. Boppre responded that it is a good

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estimate, that they typically communicate, through Randy Gust, with Grand Forks when the river reaches that level and close it at about 40-feet. Wieland concurred with Boppre's response.

Birst referred to Table 1, and continued going over the information listed for each of the bridges. He commented that one thing they discovered concerning the Louie Murray Bridge was that it could close before the Sorlie Bridge if berms aren't used along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, but during the last flood event berms were used along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue so it was able to remain open to about 45-feet. He asked if this was something that would be done during every flooding event. Boppre responded that there are a lot of residents in the Point area, so if the Louie Murray were closed too early that doesn't go over very well with those residents, so what they did during the last flood event was to take elevation shots of both sides of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to determine how high they would have to build a berm to be able to keep 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue open, which is what they then did. He added that they have closures on both ends of the bridge, on 2<sup>nd</sup> and on 3<sup>rd</sup>, so, community-wise it behooves them to try to keep 3<sup>rd</sup> open as long as possible. He stated that he tried to convince the City Council last spring, during their daily flood meetings, that we should leave the berms there as part of the landscaping, but they were removed last year. He said, however, that this is something that should be addressed for the future. Skyberg added that whether or not it is determined that there should be permanent berms constructed there, they would continue to construct them during each flood event.

Birst asked, then, if the 45-foot level shown for the Louie Murray is okay. Boppre responded that he would like to review the elevation shots they took last year, and get back to him with an answer after he reviews them.

Birst referred to Table 2, Traffic Detour Signing/Signal Timing Adjustments/Closure Action Levels, and explained that it basically is intended to determine at which action elevation, or level traffic detour signing should be put into place, as well as when to implement traffic signal timing plans that will assist with the increased traffic.

Birst commented that Action Level 1 is similar to Table 1 where the cities will contact appropriate jurisdictions, and the media, before installing traffic closures and detours. He stated that he shows a one-foot difference, which would allow roughly a day for any media announcements. He said that the second day signing personnel would then go out and sign the detours. He added that he did discuss this with Mark Aubol, Grand Forks Street Superintendent, who indicated that he thought it would take less than half a day to get signage in place. He asked if East Grand Forks would agree with that.

Birst stated that his initial thought would be that you would sign the bridge and put the timing plans into effect in the morning, and then put the stop logs in after that, but this is something that needs to be addressed more thoroughly. He said that he would like to get a little more information from the Corps of Engineers related to, when you reach the Action 2 Level from the Corps Flood Project, is the City mandated to immediately put in stop logs, or do they have a buffer, possibly up to 12-hours before that needs to be done. Paulus responded that the City would essentially need to start putting things together right away, as it takes at least a day or two just to get everything in order. Boppre commented that obviously these action levels, as Mr.

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Paulus said, does give us some time to prepare things, but we also would obviously need to monitor the river level and anticipate that it will pass the first action level, get everything ready, and then wait to see if and when we need to place the signs. Wieland stated that we need some flexibility in making these determinations, adding that it isn't something that we want to rush into either.

Birst asked, for this study, let's say the forecast is that the water will continue to rise, and you start to prepare for closure, for signage should we go a foot below or should both signage and closure be started at the same time. Skyberg responded that they should have at least a twelve-hour window before signage needs to be put into place, so once we hit that Action Level, that would mean that we would start staging the closures and the signs at the same time.

Boppre commented that East Grand Forks does not have all the necessary signage at this time, and he would assume that Grand Forks doesn't either, so he was wondering where all the signage would come from, would they be purchased.

Bittman stated that as this plan is being developed, you are kind of developing things that people are going to be responsible for; whether it is signs, actions, etc., and you are going to end up having to develop a standard operating procedure, and he thinks you are going to have to have each entity sign off that they are committing financially, man-power wise, etc.. Skyberg responded that that agreement is part of what was agreed to when they signed the PCA, at which time they committed to funding and personnel availability to put the system into place. Bittman stated that he understands, but he doesn't think that is necessarily the way to go, as he still feels that you want to get commitments from everyone involved. Skyberg said, however, that it is all part of the on-going plan, and East Grand Forks has already talked to their public works superintendent concerning the installation of the these signs ahead of time, or to have the placements there so that everything can be done in a timely manner. Bittman commented that there is also this issue of who has the authority to make the decisions, that both DOTs would have to give the cities the authority to put up the signs, it isn't just a matter of you putting up signs because you make a bridge closure policy here. Williams commented that she understands that the DOTs would have to approve the placement of signs. Bittman stated that that is his point, that if you go through this whole operating procedure you can have all that done beforehand instead of asking the DOTs for permission to place a sign in a certain location, that could all be done, agreed upon, and signed-off on before the situation arises.

Birst suggested that maybe they could include a page before the title that states which agency is responsible for which section of the report, as well as which resource(s) they are responsible for.

Boppre stated that what this would entail, then, would be that we would actually have a maintenance agreement between both cities and both DOTs. Haugen asked if any of the costs involved with this would be flood protection eligible costs. Paulus responded that it probably would not be eligible costs. Thompson suggested that maybe a cross-over agreement for each type of closure be signed in order for everyone to share in the costs involved. Skyberg commented that we need to keep it all tied together, but keep is simple.

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Birst said that what he is hearing is that action levels for putting in the detour signing and coordinating traffic signals could be the same as the stop log, and people can do them both at the same time, or should it be eased off a foot and done a day earlier. Skyberg responded that it would be easier, long-term, to have the action levels all the same because they recognize that they do have the time if they put the detour signs out a foot earlier, then you build up the sense of security that you have that extra foot of freeboard, and then you lose it at the end, so if you have them all tied together it would be best. Boppre added that he agrees with Mr. Skyberg, that it should all be tied together so that problems don't occur years down the road when new people take over, so the simpler you make it the better. Birst stated that that seems to be the general consensus, but he would welcome any other comments anyone may have.

Birst referred to Table 3, Traffic Detour Signing/Reopening Action Elevations, and went over it briefly, explaining that it is basically the opposite of closing actions.

Birst asked if the Corps of Engineers had any guidance in terms of reopening structures is concerned. Paulus responded that it would seem appropriate that if the river is truly receding, it will recede pretty quickly, so using the same levels as used for closing of the structure would make sense, as a guidance measure.

Consensus was that reopening needs to be more flexible in the event there would be any structural damage that might need to be contended with. Ultimately, both NDDOT and MNDOT need to give final clearance before any closures are removed, and the bridge(s) reopened.

Birst referred to the next slide, Traffic Detour Routes, and went over it briefly. He stated that, basically this was actually based on personal and professional experience, as well as using the travel demand model to determine the best routes to place signage for non-local motorists to use. He said that they also have the maintenance scenario drafted and available on the FTP site for review.

Birst referred to maps illustrating the recommended detour routes, the types of signage, and the location of that signage, for each bridge closure scenario, and went over the information briefly.

Birst asked about the possibility of changing the identity of 1<sup>st</sup> Street in East Grand Forks. He explained that on the Grand Forks side there are several addresses associated with Minnesota Avenue, while there is only one on the East Grand Forks side, a pump station, and it would be clearer if that section of roadway could be called Minnesota for the traveling public. Boppre responded that that isn't something that we want to discuss at this time. Hampsten asked if the entire detour could just be called "Point Bridge Detour" instead of going by the street. Birst responded that the detours are primarily set up for the non-local motorists, and if he was driving here he wouldn't know where the Point Bridge is, but would know by looking at a street map that he wanted to go down Minnesota Avenue and cross into East Grand Forks.

Haugen commented that it is his understanding that there has been a request made to have a message sign located at the DeMers Avenue/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue off ramp. He explained that during the

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Point Bridge rehab they had a message sign located here, and it worked well, so it is felt that it might be something to consider during other events as well. Birst responded that this issue was discussed with Mark Aubol who said that he wasn't sure they would have access to a message sign, but it is something that can be recommended, and maybe rented or purchased for future use.

Williams suggested that using a sign that states: "Bridge Closed" instead of "Road Closed", might be better. She stated that this would make people more aware of what is happening on that roadway. Birst responded that the reason they chose to use "Road Closed" signs is because they thought that that type of sign would probably already be available, but if you have to purchase some anyway, it might be a good idea to purchase "Bridge Closed" signs instead.

Birst stated that things get even more hectic once more than one bridge is closed. He added that after talking to Mr. Haugen and Mr. Thompson, it was determined that it would be a good idea to have a truck detour route further east on Washington Street to help keep them off the other detour routes. He said that one thing he wanted to mention is, when driving the short section on 11<sup>th</sup>, it seemed like that was a very narrow roadway, so because we now have the truck route would it be a decent option to extend the detour up to Gateway. Thompson pointed out that you would be going by a school there.

Williams referred to the map, and pointed out that we should probably place a sign at the intersection of DeMers and Highway 2 to notify traffic coming in that the Sorlie is closed as well. Birst agreed that a sign would be warranted at that location. Hampsten suggested that signs should also be placed at the intersection of Business Route 2 and Highway 2 as well, as some people use that route as a short-cut. Birst agreed.

Birst referred to a slide that lists the study activities, and pointed out that they have finalized the detour routes and have come up with some estimates on traffic impacts due to bridge closures. He stated that they will now be working on finalizing the action levels, and making changes to the traffic detour signing. He added that they have a lot of information in their traffic analysis model, Synchro, and will just need to do some timing plans and run them through the City of East Grand Forks and MnDOT for their approval, after which they will develop their draft and final reports for submittal. He said that they are making good progress, but feels that it might be a good idea to come to the next Technical Advisory Committee as well. Haugen agreed, adding that he does have a couple of questions. He asked when they would have access to the timing plans for review and comments. Birst responded that their initial plans were to have all the flood data by the end of March, so they should have the timing plans completed by the end of next week. He added that there will be nine sets of timing plans for review and comment.

Haugen asked, in regard to the timing plans, as discussed; having 12-hours or 24-hours to start getting wrapped up to change the timing plans, and while he doesn't know how long it takes to change all the timing plans that we might be talking about, would this be accomplished through the cabinetry of each individual signal, is there a master switch, or is it another cost component we can add in to collectively change up all of our signals. He asked how much time, manpower, leeway is needed ahead of time because he assumes the deal is that as we close bridges the timing plans are adjusted right away, or concurrent, so that as the traffic changes the plans are

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already in place to make the change. Birst said that he would assume that MNDOT does not have interconnect, or a central location, so that would entail physical downloading of the plans with the controller, but, in theory you could download all the plans under a unique name, and then you would just have to call up that plan during events.

Haugen asked if A.T.A.C. would be able to distribute the timing plans by March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Birst responded he would. He added that something they will need to do is to get an agreement from both sides of the river as to how long they want their A.M., Mid-day, and P.M. peak times, and when they want to go free, especially with DeMers Avenue because there are several signals there that could be coordinated.

Birst reported that he did talk to a representative from BNSF, to see if they had any written procedures on what they need to do during flooding events, but it appears there isn't anything documented. He said that they did say that they would try to adjust the train crossing Gateway Drive from the State Mill, to try to have it cross during a non-peak time. He commented that there are only two trains crossing at that location each day, but added that there are six to eight trains crossing 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in East Grand Forks, at various times, so we really can't do much there, but there is hope for those crossing Gateway.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>,  
2007, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 4:05 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Executive Assistant