

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Friday, September 14th, 2007 – 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks MPO Conference Room**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steve Gander called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Chairman Steve Gander, Gary Malm, and Doug Christensen.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Nancy Ellis, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; Teri Nelson, GF/EGF MPO Planner; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Gander declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR COLLECTOR/COLLECTOR
TRAFFIC CONTROL STRATEGY PLAN**

Haugen distributed copies of the presentation given by the Consulting Firm MMM Group, whom the selection committee is recommending be hired to perform the Collector/Collector Traffic Control Strategy Plan Study (a copy of which is included in the file, and available upon request). He referred to pages 10 and 11 of the document, and explained that they were able to show the committee that they had the most experience working with these types of intersections, as well as conveying pertinent information to the public.

Haugen pointed out that the example shown at the top of page 11 indicates that, while all-way stops are the favored traffic control of the public, they really are one of the least effective types of traffic control methods at these types of intersections.

Christensen asked which intersection is going to be studied for a possible roundabout. Haugen responded that the first most likely candidate is the intersection of 34th Street and 24th Avenue.

Haugen commented that in addition to the fact that MMM Group has the most experience in working with the public in this area, the committee also liked the fact that they actually did a very similar study in Fargo on 17th Avenue. Malm asked if that study included a roundabout as well. Haugen responded that Fargo did agree to install roundabouts in the future. He referred to page 9 of the document, pointing out that it illustrates examples from that study.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE
Friday, September 14th, 2007**

Christensen asked if staff informed MMM Group that we were considering a roundabout. Haugen responded that they did not only focus on roundabouts, but all firms involved had discussion on this. Christensen asked, then, how they happened to stumble on that information. Haugen again referred to page 11, and pointed out that the chart indicates that roundabouts are getting the most play nationwide, and is one of the most common solutions that the public offers to us for traffic situations in their neighborhood. He added that part of why we are doing this study is so that we can address to the metropolitan area what the good and bad points are with installing a roundabout, where they fit best, and why.

Christensen asked how much was budgeted for this study. Haugen responded that they programmed \$60,000.00 for consultant costs for this study. Gander asked if all of the proposals came in under budget. Haugen responded that because they aren't able to look at any of the other proposals until a contract is signed with the selected firm, they don't know what the other bids are at this time.

Christensen commented that where he is coming from with this is that another staff person's planning has caused this to now need to be addressed, and now we have another staff person who has a little bit of an appetite for experimentation in the form of a roundabout, and he is mindful of his staff people having a design criteria to have diagonal parking with people needing to back in to the parking space, which cost somebody \$35,000.00, and was summarily rejected, and now we have this study for \$60,000.00 and he is curious as to why the other folks didn't include, as part of their bid criteria, what they know about roundabouts. Haugen responded that the other consultants did propose considering roundabouts; and highlighted their experiences, but they just didn't have the same experience/knowledge as this firm did. Christensen asked if there was anything in writing requesting information on their knowledge of roundabouts. Haugen responded that it was in the RFP, that they included a list of possible traffic control strategies that would be reviewed, and roundabouts was one of them. He added, again, that roundabouts are the most effective traffic control strategy, and is also the one they get the most requests for, so instead of hiring someone with the least experience with roundabouts, they are recommending hiring the one with the most experience.

Gander asked if it the possibility of putting a roundabout in at the intersection of 13th and Bygland Road wasn't discussed at a previous meeting, and if MNDOT didn't say that they wouldn't recommend a signal be placed at that intersection, and recommended that a roundabout be explored as an option. Haugen responded that in Minnesota you have to justify why you aren't putting a roundabout in before you can install a traffic signal. Christensen stated that he is more concerned with the State of North Dakota, and the citizens of Grand Forks and what they are used to. He said that he isn't against experimentation or projects, but we have all driven someplace where there has been a roundabout. Malm commented that he has never seen a roundabout work. Gander added that he agrees that it is something different, something to get used to. Malm stated that we haven't even exposed anyone to how they look or how they work. Haugen reported that they would be utilizing Channel 2 with information on this issue. Christensen stated that he doesn't feel that the public will get much from us putting it on Channel 2. Malm said, however, that we need to find a way to get this out to the public, and to the planning commission and city council members.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE
Friday, September 14th, 2007**

Discussion on the best way to disseminate this information ensued.

Malm commented that the thing he likes about this location being considered for a roundabout is the fact that it isn't really a major intersection, and the traffic speeds aren't too fast, so from that standpoint this is a good location.

Christensen stated that there isn't a doubt that this will all come back recommending a roundabout, adding that this is an "MAI (made as instructed), so don't try to fool anyone.

Gander asked how certain staff is that the consultant will come back with a recommendation to put in a roundabout at this, as well as some other locations. Haugen responded, again, that because roundabouts are the most efficient way of controlling traffic at some of these intersections, why wouldn't we recommend them. Gander stated that in reading this information, in addition to managing this point we are really looking for protocols of how we can develop a standard that can be applied throughout the entire community, so at this traffic level we do this, and at that traffic level we do that.

Christensen asked what other intersections might be considered for a roundabout. Haugen responded that a possibility might be the intersection of Ruemmele Road and 34th.

Malm stated, again, that there are some groups that need to know what a roundabout is, and how it works, before you start building them, so he would suggest bringing this to the Planning Commissions.

***A MOTION WAS MADE BY MALM TO APPROVE THE SELECTION COMMITTEE'S
RECOMMENDATION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MMM GROUP TO
PERFORM THE COLLECTOR/COLLECTOR TRAFFIC CONTROL STRATEGY PLAN.***

Motion died for lack of a second.

Christensen commented that basically how this is going to work is that we are going to spend \$60,000.00 for something that was "made as instructed", and by a group from Canada who will be coming down and giving us European engineering ideas, so if you are ready for the appetite, and you believe that the MPO is an experimental process, and we should do this that is fine, but we will be spending \$60,000.00 to get a study done in that area, and you are going to have a bunch of community involvement, and then by the time it gets programmed everyone will have forgotten that they were involved, and then you are going to put in a roundabout and have another big uproar, but if you believe that that is the mission of the MPO, fine. He asked if Dr. Gander and Mr. Malm agree that this is something that we all believe is important for the growth and well being of the citizens of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, and is it appropriate because he doesn't know. He added that he has no problem experimenting, but he wants everyone to know where it is going. Malm stated that he agrees 100% with what Mr. Christensen has said, but he also feels that we need to get something moving in the right direction, and we need to look at some different ways of exposing people to those ideas otherwise we throw it in front of them and it becomes a dead issue, and you have just wasted \$60,000.00. He added that he feels that

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE
Friday, September 14th, 2007**

somebody from the MPO needs to go out and talk to the City Councils and Planning Commissions to let them know that we need to start looking at the traffic patterns in the area, and how to deal with them. Christensen stated that he would then like to suggest that this issue be submitted to the Planning Commissions for their approval and input before doing the study.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MALM, SECONDED BY CHRISTENSEN, TO REQUEST THAT THE MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPEAR BEFORE THE GRAND FORKS AND EAST GRAND FORKS PLANNING COMMISSIONS WITH A PRESENTATION EDUCATING THEM ON ROUNDABOUTS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD LIKE THESE AREAS EXPLORED, AND IF FAVORABLE INPUT IS RECEIVED, STAFF SHOULD THEN PROCEED WITH THE STUDY.

*Voting Aye: Malm, Christensen, and Gander.
Voting Nay: None.*

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MALM, SECONDED BY CHRISTENSEN, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2007, MEETING OF THE MPO FINANCE COMMITTEE AT 12:31 P.M.

*Voting Aye: Malm, Christensen, and Gander.
Voting Nay: None.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Executive Assistant