

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Wednesday, November 21st, 2007 – 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

Steve Gander, Chairman, called the November 21st, 2007, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:20 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Chairman Gander, Dick Grassel, Terry Hecht (Proxy for Punky Beauchamp), Steve Adams, Gary Malm, and Doug Christensen.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Teri Nelson, GF/EGF MPO Planner; Ali Rood, GF/EGF MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Gander declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY MALM, SECONDED BY CHRISTENSEN, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 12TH, 2007 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF STREET/HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE

Haugen reported that this update has gone through the approval process on both sides of the river, with both Planning Commissions and City Councils unanimously adopting the draft that is before you today.

Haugen stated that he received an email from our federal partners requesting that certain language be included in our resolution, which is illustrated by the following slide. He referred to that slide and went over it briefly. He explained that the issue being raised involves the determination of compliance with SAFETEA-LU. He added that our federal partners need to review all of the documents, therefore comments may still be received from them after that review that we may need to address. Christensen asked what “addressing” the comments means, that if we don’t agree with their suggestions do we still move forward. Haugen responded that

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basically we will have to reach agreement, however they don't approve our Transportation Plan, but do approve all of the documents that flow from that plan, primarily the T.I.P. document which releases our funding, so if they have an issue, which he doesn't anticipate, but if there were an issue we would have to address it to everyone's satisfaction.

Gander asked if this would be problematic for us. Haugen responded that they would not. He added that in order to be SAFETEA-LU compliant we have been meeting with our federal partners, and we have shown how we are compliant, or becoming compliant with their rules and regulations, but they are still requesting time to review all the documents before concurring that we are in compliance. Gander asked if there might be a way to include a phrase in the document that would allow that our action today would be final, however should there be a need for any changes, those changes could be incorporated without having to bring it back to us. Haugen responded that that was what he intended. He added that they have indicated a prompt review and comments back to us as soon as possible.

MOVED BY HECHT, SECONDED BY MALM, TO APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION WITH FULL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT OUR FEDERAL PARTNERS WILL PROVIDE COMMENTS THAT WE WILL ADDRESS.

Voting Aye: Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE 2008-2012 T.I.P. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

Haugen reported that there were no applications submitted by Minnesota for the Safe Routes To School program. He stated that the City of Grand Forks submitted two applications for the North Dakota Transportation Enhancement program. He said that the first one was for a new trail on South Washington, south of 47th Avenue; and the second one is for reconstruction of the English Coulee trail south of 17th Avenue. He commented that the City Council's priority ranking lists the South Washington trail first, and the reconstruction of the English Coulee trail second. He stated that staff reviewed the applications and found that they were compliant with the Long Range Transportation Plan, and would recommend approval.

Christensen asked what the English Coulee project consisted of. Haugen referred to a map, included in the packet, and pointed out where the project was located. He then explained that the project consists of removing a portion of the old asphalt path and replacing it with a concrete path. Christensen asked if it would be an eight-foot or ten-foot wide path. Haugen responded that it would be a minimum of ten-feet.

Gander asked who initiates these project requests; the city, school district, county, or all of the above. Haugen responded that there are only three agencies that can submit project requests for

Transportation Enhancement funds in North Dakota; cities with a population of 5,000 or more, counties for anybody else, and state agencies, although for a metropolitan areas only the City can

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make such a request, so if UND or the county wanted to submit a request that request would need to go before the City Council for approval.

Grassel pointed out that East Grand Forks didn't submit any Safe Route To School applications, but one of the things the City is doing next summer is putting in the sidewalk along Bygland Road from 6th to 13th, but there was also discussion on possibly connecting the area from 13th to the Middle School as well, and he was wondering if an application might be submitted for it. Haugen responded that they are working with some residual funds the high priority project, or the earmarked project for 13th.

Christensen stated that although the staff report says that the City Council ranked the South Washington Street project first, if we approve this today would that mean that we would be doing it rather than the English Coulee path. Haugen responded that if approved today, staff would submit the prioritized projects to the NDDOT as submitted, but there is a Governor's Task Force, which consists of thirteen members who review all of the applications and prioritize them to the Governor, and they may respect our priority rankings or they may adjust them, but since the City Council set the priorities, that is how we left them. Christensen said that he wonders exactly how much review the City Council actually had as to the prioritization of these projects. He stated that he is very familiar with the bikepath from 17th to 24th and it is in very poor shape, and we are all familiar with the extension from 47th to 55th and he doesn't think there is a school within several miles of that path, so he doesn't think our City Council looked at these as closely as they should have so he would like to approve both of them, and take them back to the council to see if they might want to change their ranking, and do the 17th to 24th path first. Haugen asked if Mr. Christensen was suggesting that the projects be approved without a ranking. Christensen responded that he needs to get in touch with the councilmember whose ward this path is located in and ask him how he feels about getting that path fixed before the 47th to 55th path, so he would like to move to approve them subject to the City Council being able to change the ranking if desired. Grassel said that it was his understanding that the section of path between 17th and 24th was just recently put in on the west side. Christensen responded that the section they are discussing has been in place for quite some time, and is located by Century Elementary.

Haugen commented that we will be talking about the Safe Routes To School applications next, and one of the applications submitted by the City of Grand Forks involves a segment of the South Washington Street trail, under the Safe Routes To School program. Christensen asked if he was referring to the path from 47th to 55th. Haugen responded that he was, however only the section from 47th to 48th, not the entire length. He referred to a map of the area and pointed out that the T.E. application requested the portion shown in red. He stated that in addition to this, if you will notice, in the Safe Routes To School applications, this project is ranked fourth.

Christensen stated that his motion would be that we approve this, but that the ranking be reserved for the City Council's review and approval before submitting it to the State. Gander asked that the results of the council's decision be given to staff as soon as possible.

***MOVED BY CHRISTENSEN, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO APPROVE THE 2008-2012
T.I.P. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL***

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***APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO THE GRAND FORKS CITY COUNCIL'S FINAL REVIEW
AND RANKING OF THE TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS.***

Voting Aye: Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF AMENDMENT #1 TO THE 2008 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM

Haugen referred to the staff report and pointed out that it explains the reason we need to make an amendment to the 2008 Annual Work Program. He stated that he also included a copy of new language concerning a couple of studies we were asked to do that needs to be added to the work program as well.

Haugen reported that the first new study is the ITS Regional Architect Update, which was requested by Federal Highways. He stated that the City of Grand Forks also requested that we delay the study of Columbia Road, and in its place do an update to our Pavement Management System, which was originally done in 2003.

Gander asked what exactly would be photographed with this study. Haugen responded that every ten-feet four photos are taken. He said that they drive all of the functionally classified roadways both directions, and all local streets are driven in one direction, then they sit down and look at the photos and create a pavement condition ranking using several factors, which then gives both cities and the DOTs the ability to strategize which pavements need to be taken care of, as well as what needs to be done to fix it.

Gander asked if this was the data that Floan-Sanders would have used to an extensive pavement management study, or was theirs done separately. Haugen responded that initially they did an independent study a year before we did ours, but then they used our information in conjunction with theirs after ours was done. Gander stated that both City Councils should be aware that this may be something that is updated every five years as it is a huge benefit when it comes time to do repairs to our street network, particularly when special assessments need to be set, as that is something that isn't very popular with our citizens, and this gives us the ability to prove to them that the repairs do need to be done.

Christensen asked what the budget is for this study. Haugen responded that they budgeted \$55,000.00 to do the study, \$50,000.00 for consultant costs and \$5,000.00 for administration costs.

***MOVED BY CHRISTENSEN, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE AMENDMENT
#1 TO THE 2008 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM.***

Voting Aye: Gander, Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

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MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE SCHOOL SAFETY STUDY

Haugen reported that in our current Annual Work Program, as well as in the past we have hired A.T.A.C. to look at specific school sites, and working with the Safe Kids Coalition and the Grand Forks School District they have identified the schools that are included in the scope of work.

Gander pointed out that a budget of \$10,000.00 was programmed for consultant fees, and it has already been identified in the 2007-2008 Annual Work Program, so does this administration concur with the scope of work.

MOVED BY CHRISTENSEN, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO APPROVE THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE SCHOOL SAFETY STUDY.

Voting Aye: Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Introduce New MPO Intern

Haugen introduced Ali Rood, the MPO's new intern.

2. Stop Light

Christensen asked if a traffic light at 8th and Washington would qualify for any of the Safe Routes To School funding. Haugen responded that they have been working with the school district, the City's traffic engineer, and have identified a safer crossing for pedestrians to use, And that would be the one at 5th and Washington.

Grassel commented that the City of East Grand Forks has installed a new traffic device at River Road. He explained that this device consists of a pressure plate, and when a walker comes up to that plate there are flashing lights that come out of the concrete. He said that it is very new, so it will take a while to see how well it works. He stated that they are also planning on building one at the dike opening on 4th Street with federal TE funds.

Christensen asked what, if anything would need to be done to get a crossing at Washington, near All Seasons, constructed. He asked if a study was planned to look at various alternatives for this intersection. Haugen responded that he doesn't believe that a study is scheduled for that crossing, and pointed out that a crossing with side posts with two flashing lights already exists there.

Haugen reported that in the State of Minnesota the installation of this new traffic device in East Grand Forks was the first installation, however, nationally they have already been adopted into

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the Manual of Traffic Control Devices, so from a national perspective they have already been tested, tried, and proven to work. He stated, however, that we do have Ulteig Engineers looking at our school crossings, and while the crossing at Washington and All Seasons isn't designated as a school crossing, he could request to have them look at it.

Gander commented that another thing we would love to see on those things is in addition to their durability, is there some measure of safety that can be determined as to what each of these types of warning systems can bring to an intersection. Haugen responded that, again, if you look at the Manual of Traffic Control Devices, trials have been done nationally on these various systems. Christensen stated that the only issue, then, would be what the cost differential would be on each of the systems available. Haugen said that the cost of putting in the in-ground signal in East Grand Forks was about \$50,000.00. He explained that it would actually be more, but it was federally funded so that decreased the cost to us somewhat.

Information only.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY MALM, SECONDED BY HECHT, TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 21ST,
2007, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:52 P.M.***

Voting Aye: Adams, Hecht, Grassel, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant