

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 28th, 2007 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the March 28th, 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: Brad Gengler, Grand Forks City Planner; John Thompson, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Lane Magnuson, Grand Forks County Planner; and Jim Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji.

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

Guests present were: Jason Carbee, URS, and Jane Williams, Grand Forks Traffic Engineer.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen declared a quorum was not present, but that Mr. Foster was on his way.

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

Haugen reported that Nancy Ellis did put together the staff report for this item, along with materials she received from Floan-Sanders. Boppre distributed copies of an updated cost estimate, and went over it briefly, explaining that it is slightly higher than the one in the packet, but reminded everyone that even this estimate may need to be revised somewhat once the project is bid.

Boppre stated that currently they are showing the use of pavers, but that during discussion with staff, and the mention of various issues that may occur with the use of pavers, it now appears that that may not be the case, so be aware that when they go through the project design, there may be some slight changes made.

Hampsten asked if Mr. Boppre would be adverse to a suggestion that a few more pavement markings be added to the project. He pointed out that the project currently shows that a single marker in the center, and he would suggest possibly putting in additional parking lanes eight feet out from the curb. Boppre asked if Mr. Hampsten was suggesting the addition of some additional stripping. Hampsten responded that that would be correct, just so there would be something that would provide a visual cue to motorists that there is an obstruction coming up, and to give pedestrians either a false, or real sense of security.

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Boppre reported that, per code, there will be advanced warning signs on either side of the system, and he would like to know if anyone felt additional warning signs should be put in place as well. Hampsten responded that according to AASHTO regulations, warning signs are placed every 100 to 150 feet, so having a couple more on each side might be a good idea. Boppre pointed out that signs don't cost much, so putting more up shouldn't be a problem. Bittman stated, however, that you do want to try to keep the cost of this project as low as possible, so by including more things like this you increase the cost of the project. Hampsten said that he understands that, but even with the additional signage and stripping you would still be more than 50% under the cost of the original proposal. Bittman stated, however, that by using this as a test site, you need to be aware that when you do something like that you need to try to keep the cost in-check as much as possible as it sets the tone for anything similar in the future. Hampsten responded that he understands, but what he is suggesting is the minimum requirements as far as AASHTO requirements for pedestrian/bikeways. Bittman stated that they don't follow AASHTO guidelines. Hampsten responded that he knows that the Minnesota DOT, as far as bicycle planning, were encouraging communities to use the AASHTO guidelines, and that is where he got his ideas from, and they don't add much to the cost of the project.

Boppre stated, again, that because this is a federal project he has to have plans, specifications, sign-off on right-of-way, and an estimate to Lou Tassa by April 9th. He asked if they do this as a demonstration project, and we were originally supposed to get \$180,000, where does the remaining funds go. Bittman responded that it would be up to the ATP as to where the remaining funds will be programmed.

Bittman asked if any thought had gone in to how this system will be studied to determine if, in fact, it works well or not, and who is responsible for doing it. He stated that this is one of the concerns brought up by the ATP when this was proposed to them, so in the future, should a similar project be submitted, they would have an idea of whether or not it might be a viable option. Boppre asked, if there is a \$100,000 savings by doing this type of system versus the original project, what if we took \$20,000 of that \$100,000 and give it to the MPO to do this study, would that be doable. Haugen responded that it would cost at least \$20,000, that it might work to do a before study in 2007, and an after study in 2008.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY THOMPSON, TO APPROVE THE E.G.F. 2007 T.E. PROJECT SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL STRIPING, AND INCLUSION OF \$20,000.00 TO DO A BEFORE AND AFTER STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE
- TRAFFIC VOLUME FORECASTS**

Haugen reported that Jason Carbee, URS, is here today to give an update on where we are at with our 2035 Traffic Volume Forecast update. He stated that a copy of a very preliminary report was

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included in the packets, however it is already in need of modification, and will most likely need more as time goes on, but it is pretty close to what we believe our 2035 base traffic volume projections will be.

Carbee distributed updated information, as well as a copy of the power point presentation he would be giving.

Presentation ensued (a copy of which is included in the packet, and available upon request).

Boppre referred to the housing growth map, the section shown in green in the upper right hand corner by the golf course, and explained that there has been some discussion that there may be an additional nine holes added to the golf course in this location. He stated that this might be something we want to include in the report. Carbee responded that at the preliminary level this may not be something we want to include, but he will consider it later.

Boppre reported that there is also a small housing unit being constructed on the west side of River Road that will add about 16 more housing units.

Haugen referred to the housing growth map, and commented that it is an updated figure compared to the one given in the packet. Carbee responded that it is, he pointed out that there was a slight tweak made to the growth numbers in South Grand Forks, basically redistributing some of the housing and four adjacent TAZs. He stated that it probably doesn't have a lot of effect on the amount of traffic that we would forecast there, but he will try to point out all changes/differences between the presentation and the memorandum included in the packet.

Boppre asked if they could use this document as an instrument to convince MnDOT of the need for traffic lights along Bygland Road. Haugen responded that he doesn't believe that either DOT uses 2035 projections to warrant traffic signals. He stated the they might use future traffic if there is known development taking place, such as a Super Target being constructed in an area within the next five years, that will generate significant traffic.

Carbee referred to the preliminary future conditions section, and explained that it basically screens and anticipates future areas of congestions. He stated that so far the forecasts we have gone through are based on a base 2035 network. He said that, essentially, what is in the T.I.P., the five year plan, is included, as are some collector improvements that support where development is planned to be. It does not include proposed bridge connections including the interchange at Merrifield and a bridge crossing at 32nd. He stated that this means that when you

see some of these areas of congestion showing up, they don't assume any sort of improvement beyond what is indicated in the T.I.P.

Carbee referred to the 2035 Traffic Congestion Map, and explained that there are two categories: 1) Level of Service F, which is at or over capacity and 2) Level of Service D and E, which are the triggers for an improvement. He stated that Level of Service C is your target, or starting

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point for everything. He then went over the projected capacity changes at various locations shown on the map, explaining, again, that this is preliminary, and adding that they would be doing a more detailed intersection based analysis using these forecasts.

Carbee commented that the next phase of the study is to look at alternatives to address the issues that have arisen from the study, as well as the capacity issues that we have identified to-date, which will affect some of the assumptions we assume will be carried forth.

Carbee referred to the slide listing the next steps, and reported that items 1 and 2 will be completed prior to the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting, and then they will begin working on 3, which consists of looking at every improvement you might consider. He stated that after that point they will begin the screening phase, in which we will take a list of possible improvements and screen them down to a more manageable list that still addresses all potential issues and congestion we might have out there. He added that these meetings will be conducted as a kind of workshop study in that they will go through each of the improvements, talk about the pros and cons of each, and get feedback from this body. He said that they can then talk about cost versus funding, come up with recommendations, and finally go through the documentation and approval process.

Williams asked about Columbia Road, and whether or not they had looked at doing any operational improvements, such as signal timing, or other improvements at the intersection, such as right turn pockets rather than just improvements along the entire corridor. Carbee responded that they aren't quite to that stage yet, but that will be something they will be looking at.

Haugen stated that they are asking for input from everyone as to what improvements they may have been thinking about, besides the ones we already have identified as recommended improvements to the network, so if you could get that information to him as soon as possible, it would be appreciated so we can start running the alternatives in the 2035 network conditions and see if they will or won't solve the issue you think they might, or if they create another issue somewhere else.

Hampsten commented that if there is increased traffic on the main streets, people will want to do cut-throughs through the neighborhoods, so he was wondering if we had some sort of program down the line, twenty or thirty years down the road, whereby we might put traffic calming devices in the neighborhoods to encourage people to use arterials and collectors instead. Carbee asked if there were any thresholds in either City that trigger the consideration of traffic calming. Haugen responded that staff drafted a traffic calming policy for Grand Forks, but it never went beyond the draft stage. Carbee added that, from a traffic flow standpoint, if we can keep the

traffic flowing well on the arterials and collectors, the desire to cut through the neighborhoods should remain low. He said that maybe a policy recommendation is necessary. Williams commented that the problem is that when you block traffic you also block response time of emergency vehicles, so it is more than just blocking through traffic involved. Hampsten responded that he understands that, but you can do all kinds of things, and a lot of other cities

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have implemented some type of method to calm traffic on their neighborhood streets. Williams agreed, but added that it just isn't a simple issue to deal with, and the real object is to keep the traffic flowing on the arterials and collectors so people don't use the neighborhood streets.

Williams asked if there was a list of intersections that you assumed were signalized in 2035. Haugen responded that a list could be generated if desired. Williams stated she would like to see that list if possible. Carbee said that part of the recommendations that come out of this study will be consideration of signal additions over the next thirty years. Haugen added that Mr. Thompson and himself sat down and identified those locations that will need signals, as was also done in the 2003 model as well.

Thompson asked when the public input process would begin. Haugen responded that the next public input meeting will be held April 10th or 12th, centered around our next Technical Advisory Committee meeting, and from that point on there will essentially be one scheduled around the next few TAC meetings, and then when we get into the formal adoption process we go into both City's Planning Commission approval processes. He stated that Mr. Magnuson and he talked a about involving the County Planning Commission as some of these things are in the County's Plan.

Haugen said that they will take the information given today, make the modifications suggested, and wait for your input on alternatives you feel need to be explored, particularly model runs. He added that they would have A.T.A.C. do some model runs as well, using the alternatives listed in the current plan, to ensure that they are still viable projects.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Amendment Required To T.I.P. And S.T.I.P.

Bittman stated that an amendment to the T.I.P. would be required to include the new T.E. Project we approved for East Grand Forks today. He explained that because the project scope changed, and amendment is required. Haugen responded that he is already doing a T.I.P. amendment in April so he will add this one as well. He reported that the Draft 2008-2011 T.I.P. document will also be available for review in April as well.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY BITTMAN, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 28TH, 2007, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:38 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant