

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 – 1:30 p.m.  
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: James Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji; Dean Wieland, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Jane Williams, Grand Forks Traffic Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Charles Durrenberger (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planner, Senior; Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck; Mark Johnson, FHWA-Bismarck; and Kent Ehrenstrom, MNDOT-Bemidji.

Guests present were: Robert Fode, NDDOT-Office of Transportation Programs; Tim Mitchell, FHWA-Minnesota; Cindy Carlsson, MNDOT-Central Office; Dave Leftwich, NDDOT-Local Government; Jason Carbee, URS; Bill Troe, URS; Jason Baker, NDSU-ATAC; Jim Curran, MNDOT-Crookston; Mohammad Naser, NDSU-ATAC; Shawn Birst, NDSU-ATAC; and Jerry Skyberg, EGF Building Inspector.

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

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2007 MINUTES**

***MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO APPROVE THE APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2007, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2007 ANNUAL ELEMENT OF THE T.I.P.**

A. Public Hearing

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B. Committee Action

Haugen reported that copies of a staff report indicating a request to potentially amend the T.I.P., was included in the packets, however since the packets were sent out discussion was held regarding this issue, and it now appears that there is little need to continue on with this process. He explained that the funds in question have already been put towards the other two projects, therefore there really is no need for the T.I.P. to be amended, nor is there a need to hold the public hearing that was advertised.

**MATTER OF PRESENTATION ON STREET AND HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE**

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that it includes a memorandum from URS on Alternative Analysis. He added that a few weeks ago he also electronically forwarded the 2035 Traffic Forecasts for the network for everyone to review as well. He stated that Bill Troe and Jason Carbee, consultants from URS, are here today to give a brief presentation on the Street and Highway Plan Update.

Presentation ensued.

Troe explained that what they want to do today is to work through the first round of the alternative analysis. He reminded everyone that back in February he presented to the Technical Advisory Committee, the process they proposed for going through the alternatives analysis, which is essentially a two-phase process. He explained that the first phase consists of going through and assessing as many potential alternatives as possible for an issue area that was identified through either the public process, or, if identified through the technical analysis they would want to identify as many potential improvement concepts as they can so that they get a very broad breadth of ideas. He stated that in the first phase they also want to set aside those alternatives that have fatal flaws, as well as to make sure that they document why it has a fatal flaw, and then create a list of alternatives that they would be maintaining, and one that would be complimentary to some of the stand-alone alternatives. He added that what they want to do today is to walk through the first level of the analysis, and create lists of the alternatives we want to maintain, and the ones we want to dismiss, so this needs to be a very interactive discussion.

Troe stated that they have completed some of the technical analyses of the various alternatives, however have not modeled them all at this time. He added that what they have completed is documented in the matrix that was included in the packet that everyone received for this meeting. He commented that what they are looking for today is that element of local input, as, if you will remember back when he was talking about the two-phase alternatives analysis process, they are looking at each of these alternative from three perspectives; environmental, engineering, and social; and to get a lot of input, at least for the social perspective, they are going to need additional knowledge that neither Jason nor himself have about things like locality, consistency with other plans such as the Comprehensive Plan, the County Plan, etc..

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Troe reported that as they are walking through the analyses they will be looking at each of the issue areas, which, again, were identified through the public involvement process; through the use of a survey; and through discussions with staff. He explained that some of the issue areas include current and future safety and operational concerns.

Troe explained that, while we would all like a purely analytical process to follow to determine the alternatives, that isn't possible as there are so many elements to look at, especially from the social perspective, so we have to be able to accept that some of the assessments we are going to be doing are somewhat qualitative.

Troe stated that we need to start looking at where we are going to going in the future because that creates one piece of what we are looking at. He said that our change in travel is really tied to the number of dwelling units that are being constructed, the new employers that are coming into the region, and also the location of each of those groups in relation to each other. He reported that they are anticipating that through 2035 we will be looking at 9,300 new dwelling units in the region, and about 14,000 new employees, so we now need to look at where these will be located. He referred to a map of the area, and pointed out where all of this growth is anticipated to be located.

Troe reported that the key to all of this, when we look at traffic issues, is to look at the growth and trips in the region, specifically the amount of increase in daily vehicle trips that are associated with the increase in employment and dwelling units, and we are looking at about a 34% increase in the total number of trips. He explained that the way the trip generation and the model is done is purely linear, so if we are anticipating about a 34% growth in trips, we would have about a 34% growth in the intensity, or the level of population and employment because those are all linear in the way the model is working. He pointed out that when we look at the growth in vehicle miles of travel we show about a 57% growth. He explained that this is due to the fact that the vast majority of development, from both a residential and employment standpoint is occurring at what he calls "the outside of the donut", so you still have a lot of the trips going to the downtown areas, to the University area, and in all likelihood those trips will become longer, which would then mean a greater increase in vehicle miles traveled relative to the number of trips being generated.

Williams asked how they did the generation on the trips, and did they assume the trips were home based so that they were all generated from home, and what rates did they use. Troe responded that the way the trip generation works is that you divide it into productions and attractions. He explained that productions are primarily based at the home place, and, although there may be a smattering at the work place, 95% are at the home place. He added that about 85% to 90% of the attractions are at the work place, so when you go through the process of balancing the two, you have to use a different rate for each. Williams asked what their assumption was for single-family. Troe responded that it probably ranges between 9 and 11 trips. Williams asked what their assumption was for multi-family. Troe responded that it would be at the low end of the trip, however they didn't do this, so it would be better to check with A.T.A.C. to determine the answer to that question. Williams stated that she asks this because,

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with the high number of university students we have here, she would think that that would make that number different than what you would normally have for just a multi-residential unit from which adults just go back and forth to work. Troe responded that those adjustments should have been taken into account during the calibration process. Benning commented that they had this same question come up when A.T.A.C. did Fargo's model a couple of years ago, so they actually hired an outside consultant to come and do a peer review, and they found that about 96% to 97% was right on. Haugen commented that John Thompson should have the calibration validation document that A.T.A.C. produced for us, if not he can get it for anyone that would like a copy.

Troe referred to a map that illustrates the existing conditions of various intersections. He pointed out those locations where we are starting to approach acceptable capacity levels, which they are assuming is a Level of Service "C", and those locations where we are already at a Level of Service "C" or higher, and went over it briefly.

Troe reported that in looking at the existing conditions map, and then we start to look forward to 2035, with the existing plus committed network, we see that that growth and development results in some significant changes in congestion, primarily to the south, where they are assuming in their modeling that this development will occur, but they have not made any assumptions that if the development occurs that the arterial system will be increased as well, so that has not yet been built into the model, but will be dealt with through the alternatives analysis.

Troe stated that he would now like to get into the alternatives analysis. He said that first they want to do their initial screening, and are looking at each of the areas and their potential improvements individually. He explained that they do this in order to put all the information into a system, but as they are going through the information they need to know what potential improvements each of the pieces might have, so that when they put all of the pieces together, and come up with a cumulative effect, we can make the determination as to whether or not something will work and is affordable.

Troe reported that as we go through the alternatives analysis we also need to consider that, while this is the street and highway element of the plan we don't want to ignore the other modes, the transit modes and non-motorized systems, so that where we have the potential for interaction between the modes, we take into account, as we are going through the roadway alternatives, the fact that when we are looking at particular improvement needs at a particular location in town, there is not a silver bullet for any specific location, and that it is ultimately going to take a combination of improvements to address 50% of each of the individual areas that they are going to have to look at from a multi-front approach to ensure they are getting to a reasonable solution.

Troe stated that when they look at the roadway system, what they are focusing on in order to be consistent with the overall transportation plan goals and objectives, is to reduce congestion, to improve safety, and to improve efficiency of the system. He said that when they look at the alternatives they want to make sure they get the greatest return possible on their investments, so they are going to have to go through a process of balancing those out as they are working through the entire process, and that's parts of the discussions they will need to have.

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Troe explained the measures of effectiveness they are using as they look at each of the improvements, and went over each of the alternatives that have been incorporated into the matrix.

Troe reported that the first corridor he would like to discuss is the Columbia Road congestion. He pointed out that when you look at the existing conditions you will see that there are a few locations, such as at 17<sup>th</sup>, at which they are starting to approach the acceptable capacity, and as we look out to 2035 much of that corridor will have gotten to the point where we will be at or over the acceptable capacity, and that is why we need to try to find ways to improve that corridor. He commented that when we look at trying to come up with a range of improvements, we come up with things like: 1) adding capacity through the expansion of the corridor by adding lanes, either through lanes or turn lanes; 2) improving the timing; 3) improving another corridor to try to divert some of the traffic out of the congested corridor; 4) building a new corridor to try to create a diversion route for traffic in the congested corridor; 5) enhancing transit; or 6) changing our land use patterns.

Jason Carbee, URS, took over the presentation at this point, and went over the various proposed improvements for each intersection.

Hampsten asked if the proposed improvements for Columbia Road and Washington Street assume that the underpass or overpass at the railroad would be expanded. He pointed out that on Columbia Road you currently have a narrow four-lane overpass, and he was wondering if it is assumed that it would either be rebuilt, or would have an additional structure added to expand it to six-lanes; and also at Washington, he knows it is scheduled to be rebuilt in the future, but is there the assumption that it would be rebuilt to six-lanes given the seven-lane option. Carbee responded that it could be either, but at this point he would assume that would probably look at dropping lanes at the ramps, that the far right lane would become an off-ramp. Hampsten commented that he brings this up because Washington Street and Columbia Road are both busy streets, partly because they are connecting the northend to the southend, with the northend housing the University which is one of the biggest traffic generators in the City, and so the reason there is so much heavy traffic on those streets isn't just the commercial strips located on both of them, but also because they do tie into the northend. Troe agreed, adding that no other corridor does that. Hampsten added that they are both grade-separated corridors for the railroad as well, whereas 42<sup>nd</sup> is not grade-separated. Troe asked if the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Underpass was incorporated into the 2035 base. Carbee responded that it is not incorporated into the base. Troe said, then, that it will come back into the alternatives analysis because the only things that are incorporated into the base network for 2035 are those things that are in the existing T.I.P. or in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Presentation continued.

Williams asked, at the intersection of Columbia and 17<sup>th</sup>, if they are looking at adding a right turn lane for southbound traffic as a separate scenario from the dual left turn lane scenario. Troe responded that they are both addressed under the same alternative. Williams stated she asks this

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because there are almost as many people making right turns as there are making left turns, so pulling those people out of the through lanes would tremendously change the back-up problem at that intersection.

Troe pointed out that the option of widening Washington Street to seven lanes would essentially only amount to a transfer of traffic from one corridor to another, therefore, he would recommend dismissing that option as a potential improvement for Columbia Road, and should instead address Columbia's problems on Columbia. Williams asked if they had looked at the possibility of closing some driveways along Washington Street, and having traffic come off the side streets instead, as there is a problem with people being stopped because someone wants to pull into a driveway when it would have been just as easy, and more efficient for them to use the side street instead. Troe responded that they have not yet begun the process of assessing any of the corridors from an access management standpoint, but that is probably something that should be addressed at some point.

Wieland asked if the widening of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street down to 17<sup>th</sup>, and the construction of 48<sup>th</sup> on the other side of I-29 would have any effect on Columbia Road. Carbee responded that the widening of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street will, and that is actually something that A.T.A.C. could do a model run on. Troe added that if you observe what happened over the last five years with the improvements on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, from a connectivity standpoint, we are seeing a diversion so as we improve that level of connectivity, and as the volumes on Columbia continue to grow, and along with that the congestion, he would assume that there would be a diversion that just hasn't been modeled yet. Wieland asked again about 48<sup>th</sup> Street as well. Carbee responded that 48<sup>th</sup> is included in the alternatives analysis already.

Durrenberger asked if the extension of 20<sup>th</sup> would involve a signal. Carbee responded that he would anticipate that it would not. Hampsten disagreed, stating that they get a lot of traffic on 20<sup>th</sup> as there is a high school located there. Carbee stated that the way it was documented in here was basically to minimize any concerns about through traffic getting in and out, but in looking at it more closely it would meet the signal density characteristics off of 17<sup>th</sup>. Williams commented that it would just have to be a coordinated system, that they would just add to the system at that location as that would be more efficient. Hampsten stated that the only other option would be to put in a median down the middle of Columbia Road at that location forcing people to turn right. Troe added that something tells him that if we go to the public with the suggestion of extending 20<sup>th</sup> to Columbia Road we wouldn't be welcomed with open arms, and a compromise might very well be to extend it, but only as a right-in/right-out, or as a three-quarters with no left out.

Troe asked if there were any improvements that we should be dismissing as a focused improvement on Columbia Road. He added that from his standpoint the widening of Washington Street should be dismissed.

Bittman asked if any of the alternative river crossings would affect this at all. Troe responded that ultimately they would, but added that they are not incorporated into this analysis at this time. Bittman stated, however, that when you talk about the 17<sup>th</sup> Overpass, wouldn't that be similar,

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even though it is in the opposite direction. Carbee agreed, adding, again that they certainly will affect this, and that they, like the 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass, should be included at some point. Troe said, then, that alternative bridge locations should be added. Haugen added that when you think of cost, you should remember that Columbia Road is scheduled to be reconstructed, so it's not as if there is no identified need to go in and replace the old pavement with new pavement. He commented that this is the dilemma with trying to program that project, do we do it as six lanes, or something else as there is a pending project for that pavement already. He pointed out that there is actually a similar scenario for 32<sup>nd</sup>, that there are segments along 32<sup>nd</sup> that are identified as needing pavement replacement as well.

Troe continued with presentation.

Troe reported that the intersection of Washington Street and DeMers Avenue is one area in which they are seeing significant levels of congestions, both today, and projected into the future. He commented that the last transportation plan recommended adding a west-bound through lane, which would then ultimately work into a right turn lane, however, because of a much greater traffic growth than was anticipated in the last plan, that recommendation isn't going to get us to an acceptable level of service. He pointed out that they would still be looking at levels of service "E" and "F" at that location in 2035 with that type of improvement in place, but they still need to incorporate it into the overall list of alternatives, but they are also going to look at trying to add more capacity to that location by a possible grade separated alternative. He commented that in the previous transportation plans the idea of putting in a Single Point Urban Interchange at this location was identified, and as an alternative it would provide adequate capacity, but we would also have some significant impacts to the adjacent area as we would be looking at adding ramps that would be 700 to 1,000 feet long, thus causing access issues. He stated that another alternative that has been identified as a possibility is a Split Diamond Interchange, which would essentially blow-away the interchange that is there today, and create another Split Diamond, however this alternative, while it may not be as costly, there would most likely be more impacts to the Firestation, and as many impacts to the adjacent businesses along that corridor, and it does introduce a concern for a need of two signals instead of one. Carbee added that this alternative would also eliminate the issue of a "weave" over to the east-bound ramp. Troe went on to explain that they also looked at improving some of the adjacent corridors as well, including University, 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and went over some of those improvements briefly.

Hampsten asked, with all of these options for Washington Street and DeMers Avenue, are there any issues with the railroad, or are they pretty cooperative. Troe responded that anything we might want to do that encroaches on their right-of-way, we will have trouble doing, but that would also be the case with the fire station, the businesses to the south, the businesses to the southwest, and the businesses to the southeast, so this will not be an easy intersection to resolve. Haugen commented that he does know that the NDDOT-Grand Forks District has been talking about the vacant building on the southeast quadrant, about possibly purchasing it now rather than when something goes in to it. Williams asked if the fire department is happy with their current location anyway. Durrenberger responded that he wouldn't think that location would be very optimal. Haugen reported that during the 2003-2004 go-around, we were wrestling with this

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intersection, and the fire department was made aware of the dilemma, but the cost of moving the fire station is somewhere around \$4,000,000.00. He added that just prior to the flood the City was actually negotiating with the railroad to purchase the necessary land in the northwest quadrant, but once the flood occurred things stalled. Durrenberger asked about the possibility of keeping the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue interchange, and extending the lane. Troe responded that that might be doable.

Troe stated that when looking at what alternatives we should keep, and what alternatives we should dismiss, he thinks the idea of continuing 20<sup>th</sup> Street up to DeMers is probably not something that will be able to go very far, and it is fatally flawed by the impacts to the neighborhood, because, as it is built today, it is not going to reasonably serve the function we want. He added that in regard to University and 2<sup>nd</sup>, from a traffic operation standpoint he likes it, but maybe the standpoint of how it impacts the neighborhood it probably has some negatives. Hampsten pointed out that 2<sup>nd</sup> is also in pretty bad shape, and it crosses the railroad, so you are going to see delays as well. Durrenberger asked if the analysis didn't say that there are two trains a day passing at this location. Troe responded that that was correct. He asked how many other locations in town would we probably end up with the same amount of traffic at a railroad crossing that could very well have more trains crossing. Hampsten responded that 42<sup>nd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> would be examples of that type of scenario. Troe commented that the idea of going with the one-way pairs is that we would add the efficiency associated with it, and then we would start to entice more people to use it. He stated that he would be reluctant to toss that alternative out at this time because it could very well be combined with the exiting recommendation which is to add a through lane, because either the Split Diamond or the Single-Point Urban Interchanges would be very expensive.

Haugen asked what, if any, advantages the Split Diamond Interchange would have over the Single-Point Urban Interchange. Troe responded that from an operation standpoint he doesn't think the Split Diamond Interchange has any advantages, and actually has some disadvantages, including the need for two signalized intersections that are very closely spaced, whereas the Single-Point Urban Interchange only has one intersection. He added that he would like to see though, from a foot-print, whether or not the Split Diamond, with very tight distributor roads, could actually have a more attractive foot-print, and that it might also be a less intrusive foot-print. Haugen asked how the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on and off ramp interact with the Split Diamond Interchange. Troe responded that you could probably leave the existing ramps there, or take them out and bring 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue under, and then have another ramp come into the collector-distributor, so in all likelihood you would probably lose that interchange. Hampsten asked if a roundabout could be a possibility. Williams stated that they wouldn't be able to create a big enough roundabout to handle that intersection.

Discussion on traffic counts at the Washington Street/DeMers Avenue Intersection ensued.

Troe stated that the next location he would like to discuss is the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from I-29 to Washington Street. He commented that, again, they are looking at a full range of improvements, from TSM to expansion, and from a TSM standpoint they are looking at adding some turn lanes

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at 38<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, Columbia, and Washington Street. He added that another alternative they are looking at is modification of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue/I-29 Interchange to include a partial clover-leaf, which would help on the western end of the corridor.

Troe reported that they are also looking at addressing some expansion alternatives, including widening 32<sup>nd</sup> to seven lanes from Washington Street to I-29, or a subsection of it. He stated that they are looking at a 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue Interchange to try to divert some of the traffic from this corridor to a different alternative. He commented that the Merrifield Road Interchange should continue to be evaluated, and they are also looking at a 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass to try to divert some of the traffic that would be going to and from the employment opportunities that are currently growing on the west side of Interstate to the residential located to the north. He said that he would find it very difficult to say that any of these alternatives have a fatal flow to them, so each of them should be carried through to the next round of analysis.

Troe said that the next location for discussion is the downtown area, along DeMers Avenue. He commented that they are looking at some TSM, signal improvements, and widening of DeMers Avenue, although it doesn't take long to say no to widening DeMers Avenue and suggest that we maintain the TSM alternative. Carbee reported that the TSM improvement is based on the study that was done for the CBD traffic signal coordination that was completed a couple of years ago. He said that they are seeing pretty consistent volumes compared to those indicated in that study, so the recommendations made in that study, such as to remove a couple of signals, interconnect signals, would get us the capacity we need.

Haugen reported that during discussion regarding the turn-back of the Sorlie Bridge, it was implied that it wouldn't be very long before that bridge needs to be replaced, and he was wondering if anyone had a better idea of when that might occur because that seems to be the fatal flaw in terms of the widening alternative. Bittman commented that MNDOT wouldn't widen it, but the City could take it over and widen it if they wish. Haugen stated that the reason he asks is because part of what we need to determine is whether or not there will be a bridge replacement during this time period, so he would request that this be checked on.

Troe stated that the next area for discussion is the 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Safety congestion. Carbee reported that they basically identified 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue as one of the intersections that were exceeding the expected crash rate, so the options are to provide a signal at that intersection, and/or to reconstruct the intersection. He added that they also identified 34<sup>th</sup> Street as having a considerable increase in traffic, therefore we may need to consider a round-about at that location as well.

Haugen stated that they would not take about a five-minute break in order to allow for A.T.A.C. personnel to set up for their presentation, and would continue additional discussion on this, as well as remaining agenda items upon completion of A.T.A.C.'s presentation.

**SUSPEND AGENDA**

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**MATTER OF BRIDGE CLOSURE MANAGEMENT STUDY**

Haugen reported that personnel from A.T.A.C. are present this afternoon for a brief update on the Bridge Closure Management Study. He referred to a copy of the staff report, included in the packet, and reported that it does indicate where you can go to download the draft report document. He added that he also included a copy of the Draft Concept of Operations for review as well.

Shawn Birst, A.T.A.C., proceeded with a power point presentation on the Bridge Closure Management Study (a copy of the presentation is included in the file, and available upon request).

Birst stated that he hopes everyone had a chance to look at the document. He pointed out that most of the information you have seen before, at least in terms of the detour signage and detour routes. He added that the timing plan information has been reviewed by MNDOT and City Staff, and that there will be further meetings held in order to finalize any questions or concerns anyone may have with the findings to-date, so you have some new and some old information.

Birst commented, again, that the purpose of the study is to provide safe and efficient traffic flow during bridge closure events that occur in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. He stated that their primary focus was flooding events, however they did address maintenance activities, or incident management that could happen at a bridge location as well.

Birst explained that the report includes a broad sense of the project, a history of the project, data collected, various scenarios that could occur, action levels that have been reviewed by the committee, traffic modifications, etc.. He stated that they also have a section that includes the various closure plans.

Birst stated that they primarily looked at the downtown bridges; the Point, the Louie Murray, the Sorlie, and the Kennedy bridges, but also included the Mallory Bridge, at least in terms of maintenance issues, as well. He added that they also included some traffic modifications that could occur if both the Point and Murray Bridges are closed so that people have to use the Mallory Bridge instead.

Presentation ensued.

Birst referred to the Traffic Closure Action Levels document, and explained that Action 1 is the level at which the various entities contact each other, and the media about their plans for bridge closure based on the flood predictions, or water levels. He added that Action 2 basically mirrors the Corps of Engineers' two levels for closing each location during an event. He explained that this ensures that we don't have different things going on at different elevations.

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Williams suggested that they add the following: "...when it reaches the levels indicated, and we have the prediction that it will continue to rise...". Birst agreed that if the river hasn't crested, a statement such as this would be a good idea.

Birst referred to maps illustrating bridge closure scenarios for each bridge, and went over them briefly.

Birst referred information, drawings, indicating the changes required for traffic signal timing, specifically how to coordinate the signals at various locations, and went over that information briefly.

Birst commented that in terms of implementing these plans, there does need to be communication between both sides of the river as we don't want to implement the plan on only half the bridge. He referred to the slide of the signal plan implementation process and pointed out that one important thing will be to update the controller clocks during each bridge event, especially on the MNDOT side since they are not part of a closed loop system, thus their clocks can drift, so we want to make sure they are updated periodically, especially when these events occur.

Birst referred to the drawings of the Traffic Control Modifications, and explained that they typically don't have to modify too many intersections, at least in terms of the type of control they have, but they do have several timing adjustments. He then gave a brief overview of the data shown on the drawings.

Haugen referred to the Point Closures (Flood and Maintenance) drawing, and asked if Belmont and 5<sup>th</sup> shouldn't be signed as well. Birst responded that he would look into this because another approach has a yield. Williams agreed, adding that you aren't supposed to mix controls at an intersection. Birst pointed out that that section is free, yield, and then stop, so he will look into it further.

Birst commented that on the East Grand Forks side, basically for all flood closure scenarios, 4<sup>th</sup> Street is closed before any of the bridges, so they would recommend 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue have the primary right-of-way, therefore they suggest removing the stop sign there, and putting up a stop sign for the southeast direction and a yield at the other approach on 4<sup>th</sup>.

Birst reported that they found, through discussion with various committee members, that a lot of local traffic finds it's own way in taking side streets during events, primarily using 3<sup>rd</sup>, but also 2<sup>nd</sup> instead of going all the way to 4<sup>th</sup>, so they would recommend changing the stop sign configuration at that location as well.

Williams asked if they had existing counts at any of the intersections indicated on the drawings. Birst responded that they did not.

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Birst stated that, in the rare event that there wouldn't be any other access to Grand Forks or to the Point area they would recommend several changes at the intersection of County 72 and State Highway 220 and US #2 and State Highway 220. He explained that there is a significant amount of traffic, with the current AT at about 1,500 vehicles, and when the Point and Murray close it increases to 15,000 vehicles, and US #2 currently has about 6,000 vehicles, they would recommend going to an all-way stop at that intersection. Leftwich asked if they stop traffic on U.S. #2. Birst responded that they do. Leftwich stated that that isn't a good idea. Birst responded that traffic stops when they get to town, so they are just stopping it earlier otherwise you have a huge volume of traffic trying to leave the Point, and it becomes a safety issue. Ellis added that you also have two schools out there as well, so it isn't a matter of people getting out, it's a matter of people getting in.

Birst asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the Concept of Operations. He said that this is just a rough draft, but if it is something you support they can make any adjustments that might be necessary, or, if you feel it is overkill that is fine as well, but it is something they felt could be beneficial to the study and implementation process.

Birst referred to the document, and pointed out that it includes a two page Concept of Operations that encompasses the whole project, and then for each section of the bridge closure there is a mini Concept of Operation that is unique to that closure. He then went over the document briefly, explaining that basically it provides guidance for the critical tasks prior to and after bridge closure events, as well as to identify which agencies are responsible for performing all or part of the tasks required.

Curran referred to the statement about both cities inspecting the Sorlie and Kennedy Bridges prior to reopening after an event, and commented that if water gets up onto either of those bridges, MNDOT and NDDOT would have to inspect them prior to allowing them to reopen.

Williams referred to the City of Grand Forks section, where it indicates that approval is needed from NDDOT to close the Sorlie and Kennedy Bridges during flood conditions, and pointed out that under the rest of the scenarios they don't include closing the Kennedy Bridge, just for maintenance, therefore she was wondering if we want to tackle the Kennedy Bridge for a flood because if it is closed for a flood then everything else is closed as well and they would need to pull out all of the detour signing and detour everyone to the Interstate. Birst responded that the Kennedy is noted under the detour signage bullet, and added that the timing plan bullet covers all of the bridge closures because the City has all the signals. Williams stated, however, that the Sorlie and the Kennedy Bridges are both state highway facilities, and all the detours are on state highways, therefore wouldn't NDDOT be responsible for the detouring on all of the state highway facilities. Leftwich responded that they wouldn't be detouring traffic off the state highway, but would be detouring city streets. Birst added that this would apply at least for the maintenance aspect, but as far as flooding he would think maybe the City would need to take care of that, but that is something they need to determine. Bittman commented that MNDOT's take on this is that, in terms of maintenance situations, MNDOT would do it themselves, and in flood situations the City would take care of it. Birst stated that this is how he felt it should be,

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and is how it is indicated in the plan, but this is definitely something that needs to be determined by both DOT's and the Cities.

Bittman commented that, right now they are just approving what is actually in the plan, but they also need to get the maintenance folks together, the ones that are actually putting up the signage etc., and see what they feel works and doesn't work best for everyone, basically get a maintenance agreement drafted. Haugen stated, then, that what he hears is that they need to convene a different group of people. Birst commented that they can do this, but that their main focus was to train the final document, however if they can get the Concept of Operations, maybe, in addition to this, as the document has the general terms, but the concept deals with how the information is enforced. Bittman asked if that was part of the study, because that is something he would question, that maybe it is your task to make the plan, and we can approve the plan, but to actually implement it we need to get the proper people here to give input and approve the enforcement of the plan. Haugen responded that the scope was to not only come up with a plan, but to have a plan that is implementable, so convening this Concept of Operations group to get it implementable is important, plus it is part of the training as well. Birst asked if this could be done as part of the June Technical Advisory Committee. Haugen responded that they would try to schedule a meeting with those who will implement the plan separately from the June Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

Haugen stated that he feels that a two week time period will be sufficient for people to comment on the draft document so that we can get it finalized and out of the way. Birst asked that anyone having any comments please e-mail them to either himself or to Earl.

Information only.

**RECONVENE PRESENTATION ON STREET AND HIGHWAY PLAN UPDATE**

Presentation continued.

Troe stated that the vast majority of the other ideas, concepts, issues that we need to address in the transportation plan were issues that were brought up by individuals at other meetings, or through the survey. He referred to a map that illustrates where we have congested corridors, we have already discussed most of them, but added that we do have another issue, or element of the transportation plan that we need to talk about, and that is the river crossings.

Troe reported that in the previous updated transportation plan a discussion on the location of additional river crossings resulted in the recommendation that a new river crossing be included at Merrifield and one at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. He explained that when they were putting together the scope of work for this update they were concerned about opening up that can of worms again, so they decided that they would confirm the results and recommendations included in the previous update, and the way they would do that would be to determine if the development scenarios are relatively similar or are they different, and if they are similar is there really a need to go in and rehash those issues associated with whether or not there is the need for the crossings. He added

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that they also would look at whether or not the level of traffic that they are forecasting in 2035 is similar in intensity and patterns as was being forecast in 2030, and while they would expect it to be somewhat higher, is it dramatically different, and would it warrant a reassessment be done.

Troe pointed out that in looking at where development is continuing to occur, between 2030 and 2035, you are looking at a southern progression of development, so to him it is not contrary to the idea that there is the need for both of these bridges. He added that this does not mean that they automatically go into the transportation plan, but they should automatically carry through the first rounds of screening, and then be looked at more closely during the second rounds of screening.

Williams asked if these bridges were included in the last model for the last plan. Haugen responded that the last plan shows a bridge first being constructed at Merrifield, and then one at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. He added that in the recommended 2030 network, both bridges are included. Williams asked what the ADT was on the one at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. Haugen responded it was about 9,000, and added that the Merrifield Bridge ADT was about 4,000.

Troe asked if anyone had any concerns with the methodology they are proposing to use to address those river crossings. Haugen commented that it is in the financial, correct. Troe responded that it will come down to the financial, and whether or not they both make the funded element of the plan, or if one or both ends up in the Illustrative element of the plan.

Benning commented that the only real issue concerning bridges is the fact that we can't use bridge replacement funds because there are currently no bridges in place at either of these locations, at least on the North Dakota side. Leftwich added that these locations also aren't eligible for State Highway dollars either, so it will be a local issue to get funding, and so far neither the Counties nor the Cities have stepped up, or seem to be stepping up in the future to do that.

Johnson asked, if they are on the illustrative list, that would mean they wouldn't be included in any model runs, correct. Troe responded that they would have a model run of the illustrative plan, but would also have a separate model run of the funded plan.

Haugen brought up the issue of banning train horns, and commented that it does have a funding component, but is it something that should be included in the transportation plan because there is a desire to ban train horns here, locally, and it could cost millions of dollars to implement, using all road dollars as well, so should it be addressed in the plan. Leftwich responded that this would be a local issue.

Johnson commented that one thing he did notice was the discussion of future interchanges, and FHWA would definitely look to see that the local road network was in place even before an interchange justification report was issued to their office, so they would look to see that there already was a network that was somewhat functioning, and that beyond that there is a need for an interchange. Troe stated, then, that it comes down to timing, and in the transportation plan the

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interchange access modification report would not be associated with anything in the plan, but there should be discussion on the implementation that we shouldn't have an interchange out ahead of that other network. Johnson agreed. Williams stated, however, that we would want something in the plan in order to preserve right-of-way. Johnson responded that that would be correct, but he just doesn't want the assumption being that it is in the plan, and an IJR is turned in to their office the next year.

Information only.

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON TRANSIT STUDY**

Haugen referred to the staff report, and copies of a power point presentation, and stated that David Hampsten will be giving a brief presentation on the Transit Study. He added that the MPO's work program identifies that we are going to examine transit service in the western portion of our community, and they have gone through and gotten an approved scope of work from this body, and are now going to give a progress report on where we are at with the study.

Hampsten reported that the original study is being modified because of discussions with the Stand-by Safety Committee of the City of Grand Forks, and also with the Industrial Park Employers. He stated that they have had several meetings with the Industrial Park Employers and the Human Services Coordination Committee, as well as a public open house in order to garner as much information and input as possible.

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

Hampsten commented that they are looking at the western edge of Grand Forks and the southern areas of Grand Forks so the Industrial Park, which is west of I-29, and the area south of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South are their main focus with this study, as both areas continue to show both residential and employment growth.

Hampsten reported that, based on the 2004 Transportation Development Plan, the idea is to have new bus routes serving the Industrial Park, and having earlier Saturday and Sunday service. He said that they did receive some grant monies from the FTA, through the State of North Dakota, through the JARC and New Freedom programs. He added that they did receive enough funds to cover the 50/50 local match for operations for a new bus route, and extending the Saturday route, however did not receive funds for a Sunday route, although they may be able to do that in some other way.

Hampsten pointed out that some of the questions being asked are: 1) How long can we sustain the new service without going into a deficit; 2) Will we have enough money annually to sustain it; 3) Do we know what federal funds are, and will be available to us; and 4) What do we know about the possibility of the state legislature doubling our state funds? He stated that the basic answer is that we do have a fair amount of money because the Grand Forks Transit has been actually saving money over the years, and they keep a "slush" fund for future capital

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improvements, such as purchasing new buses. He said, however, that they did point out that in 2009 or 2010 new buses will be needed, so the surplus monies may or may not be needed to purchase those new buses.

Hampsten reported that in doing their analysis they are assuming that they will put in a new bus route, and are in the process of determining the best option for that, and that they most likely will put in a peak service enhancement for A.M. and P.M. Peak, for which they are trying to determine the best option and timing for, therefore they have been talking with the Industrial Park, Human Services Agencies, the public, various other stakeholders such as the Aurora Medical Center and the Canad Inn, the Areas City Transit providers, and the City of Grand Forks. He stated that, based on the political realities, and the service demographics throughout the area, they have gotten a lot of really good feedback in favor of the new services being proposed. He added, however, that through these discussions they also determined that not only will we be providing these new services, but we will also need to do some rider training for both the employees and employers.

Johnson asked what the normal hours of service are for the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks transit system. Hampsten responded that normally transit operations in Grand Forks are roughly from 6:30 to 7:00 in the morning to about 5:30 or 6:00 in the evening, and then there is a night service, which is a kind of skeleton route the service the entire City, that runs until 10:00 in the evening. He commented that one thing that was discussed is the fact that we need to get workers to work by 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning, especially in the Industrial Park, and from all areas of the City, so that is something that we are trying to get worked out. He explained that some of the options being looked at are to start all bus services earlier, to have a skeleton service in the morning with regular service beginning at it's regular time, to have shuttle services to the Industrial Park, and many other options as well.

Hampsten referred to drawings illustrating the proposed new, and/or expanded routes, and went over them briefly.

Hampsten reported that some of the transit alternatives they looked at include:

Carpool/Vanpool – This option would include allowing people to use the internet to find others going to and from the same location they are, and work out a carpooling schedule. He stated that this is an option that has been fairly successful in larger cities, and he isn't sure how well it would work here, but they seriously looked at it in any event. He added that there are Vanpool Service Agencies that specialize in renting out vehicles for this type of service, and there are already some agencies servicing this area.

Park and Ride – This option involves the need to determine how the buses can be used for it, as well as serving the rest of the community.

Shuttle Service – For this option they seriously looked at contract shuttle services for the Industrial Park. He stated that they actually suggested it to several employers, indicating

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that if they wish, this is something they could do and get a tax write off a well. Ehrenstrom asked what their response was to this suggestion. Hampsten responded that they were actually somewhat taken-aback, as they didn't even know that this was an option. He stated that a lot of this is brand new to many of the employers, particularly the fact that they can receive tax write-offs for using alternative transportation services, so they are now actually thinking about it more seriously. He added that they also hinted that as far as our local match is concerned, it doesn't necessarily have to be just taxpayer dollars, but could be payment-in-kind from these companies as well. He stated that, basically we are going to offer them a minimal level of service, and then if they want anything extra we will hint to them that if they help us we will help them.

Hampsten summarized by stating that as far as GIS and ridership is concerned, we are looking at about a 20% increase in overall ridership with these new routes, and the Industrial Park is a big impact to our community, both to Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. He stated that these new routes should be a big improvement to the system.

Hampsten commented that as far as the public, and the Human Service Agencies, early service is really important to them, and it is extremely important to the Industrial Park. He stated that for a lot of the disabled citizens Saturday services is absolutely vital, especially if they have service jobs with the retailers, they need to be at their jobs by 8:00, not 10:00 which is when the current service can get them there, but even in the Industrial Park, they want seven day service that begins early in the morning and ends late in the evening, and companies like Amazon are twenty-four hour operations, and they are significant employers. He added that there is also a possibility that LM may also switch to a twenty-four hour operation as well, so Sunday service is wanted by pretty much everyone. He pointed out that the biggest opposition comes from the Politicians, at least for Sunday Service, as they are willing to consider expanded Saturday service, and definitely want service to the Industrial Park, and there is a strong political push in that direction, so we have been encouraging employers in the Industrial Park to talk to the City Council as they do have some power right now in this.

Durrenberger asked about the possibility of using some of the surplus monies for this. Hampsten responded that they did make that suggestion, but those monies can only be used with the City Council's consent, and can't be used for anything that isn't transit related, although some of the City Council members have the notion that it can be used for various things that aren't transit related, but you legally can't do that. Johnson suggested that they could do a transit survey and show them that there is a demand for Sunday service. Hampsten responded that they are actually doing that, that they are conducting a survey on the new bus route for a two week period.

Hampsten reported that they also received a lot of comments about the need to expand coverage for the night route, including the suggestion that there be two night routes. He stated that the problem is that it doesn't serve very many areas, thus we don't have a very high ridership count.

Hampsten stated that another common complaint was the need for better connections between Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, but there isn't a lot we can do about it at this time.

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Hampsten referred to the second page of the staff report, included in the packets, and pointed out that it lists all of the findings and analysis to date.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY WIELAND, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2007,  
MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 4:55 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,  
Executive Assistant