

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 10th, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the September 10th, 2008, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:34 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Dean Rau, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Charles Durrenberger (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planner; Stacey Hanson, NDDOT-Bismarck; Dale Bergman, Superintendent for Cities Area Transit; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; and Richard Parton (Proxy for Les Noehre).

Staff present were: Teri Nelson, GF/EGF MPO Planner and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

A quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen stated that because there are some new people present today, he would ask that everyone please introduce themselves.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 13TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Haugen referred to Page 5 of the minutes and pointed out that under the 32nd Avenue Corridor Study item, the first paragraph has some question marks that need to be replaced with “Traffic Control Corporation”.

MOVED BY BERGMAN, SECONDED BY HANSON, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 13TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUBJECT TO INCLUSION OF THE ABOVE CHANGE.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2009-2012 T.I.P.

Haugen reported that included in the packets were copies of the staff report along with the best documentation staff could come up with showing that federal funds have been awarded this project. He explained that the project involves replacing railroad crossing signal gates, and other such equipment at 5th Street in Downtown Grand Forks. He said that the cost of the project is estimated to be \$180,000, with \$162,000 being federally funded and \$18,000 being funded locally. He commented that this project is one of nine that you will see in the 2008 Project Modification Report.

Haugen stated that a public hearing was advertised to occur at this meeting, therefore, he would like to open the public hearing at this time. There was no one present for discussion. He added that the public notice also allowed for the public to submit comments prior to 12:00 noon today as well, and no such comments were received, thus he will now close the public hearing.

Haugen commented that this project will likely be done next year, with the local bill being submitted in 2010.

Durrenberger asked what changes are being proposed, will they be putting in drop bars on both sides so nobody can drive through the intersection. Haugen responded that it is his understanding that they will simply be updating the existing equipment. He asked if any further information regarding this project had been received by the City to-date. Rau responded that they have no idea what is planned for this project, whether or not they are looking at upgrading to quiet-zone standards, or what. Haugen responded that they know that the scope of work at this time is to take out what is currently there and replace it with an updated version. He added that North Dakota DOT will not fund quiet zones with this program so anything that might implement anything above minimum standards would not be able to be funded with these funds. He said that there was to have been some correspondence sent to Grand Forks from North Dakota concerning this. Hanson agreed, adding that Jim Styron, from the Planning and Programming Division, the railroad section, was to have drafted a letter addressing this issue, but he had not yet had the opportunity to do so at this time, but something should be coming in the near future.

Haugen explained that what action today would do would be to add the project to our T.I.P. so that the project can be done. He added that if it is not added to the T.I.P. it cannot be done even though the funds might be available. He stated, however, that there is still time to look into this further, to postpone it until more information is received if that is what everyone wishes to do as the project is not going to be done this fall, so we could wait.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2009-2012 T.I.P. CONTINGENT UPON THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA WORKING WITH THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS TO BETTER DEFINE THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE RAILROAD SIGNAL UPDATE PROJECT.

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Boppre asked why this is the DOTs jurisdiction. Haugen responded that it is part of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), in which they set aside funds for railroad projects, and this project was determined to be eligible to be done in 2009.

Haugen asked if there is a rework or revision on how the HSIP projects are solicited and awarded. Hanson responded that there could be changes coming, but she does not have any information available on that at this time.

Voting Aye: Ellis, Boppre, Durrenberger, Hanson, Bergman, and Parton.

Voting Nay: Rau.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE FINAL CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY

Ellis said that she needs to apologize in advance for the fact that the outline this body received was the word document, not the PDF document that shows the redlines so she will go over the information briefly to clarify what items were redlined.

Ellis explained that the original corridor study for Central Avenue was submitted to this body in early February, and included the reduction of the frontage roads and the placement of a bike/ped trail. She stated that since that time it was referred back to the East Grand Forks Planning Commission by their City Council to take a closer look at the issue of reducing the frontage roads due to concerns of the business owners along that corridor. She said that revisions were made during that review, and are available for more extensive viewing on the MPO website, although she will now briefly go over the changes that were made.

Ellis referred to the outline (a copy is included in the file and available upon request) and went over each section briefly.

Ellis reported that this plan will be presented to the East Grand Forks Planning Commission tomorrow, to the City Council next Tuesday, and to the MPO Executive Policy Board next Thursday.

Boppre asked what the MNDOT requirement is for striping a bike lane and parking in the same area. Ellis responded that she doesn't have the exact figures at this time, but they can have both sharing a common space. Boppre asked about signage, or some other method to alert drivers that they are sharing the space with bicyclists. Ellis responded that they would be painting a solid white line as this is not a dedicated bike lane, but a shared area instead.

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO FORWARD A
RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY
APPROVE THE FINAL CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE 32ND AVENUE TRAFFIC OPERATIONS STUDY

Haugen reported that this was discussed at last months meeting, with Jane Williams providing an update on the study. He stated that Alliant Engineering has drafted a full report, and he did include the section that discusses how they came up with the benefit/cost analysis and the recommendations they provided in the packet.

Haugen referred to Page 41 of the report, recommendations, and pointed out that it presently recommends upgrading to 2070 controllers and utilizing protected/permissive signal phasing. He referred to Page 42 and pointed out that it talks about some geometric improvements that have been suggested including: 1) construction of an exclusive 250-foot southbound right turn lane at 32nd and 38th and 32nd and 34th; 2) construction of a second northbound and westbound left turn lane at 32nd and Columbia; and 3) lengthen the westbound left turn lane at 32nd and 31st. He added that most of these suggestions are identified in our Long Range Transportation Plan already.

Haugen commented that the report also talks about doing some signage improvements and developing a more detailed program of signal timing management.

Haugen stated that, as you can see, the mainline corridor of 32nd Avenue did see some significant improvements in both the reduction of time traveled and stops required along the corridor, and, although the side streets have experienced a slight increase in their time traveled, it is nothing extreme. He added that the consultants were back recently to tweak the system, and the 20th Street and 31st Street intersections were converted into a protected/permissive turns which does help alleviate some of the additional time issues at those intersections.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY RAU, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE 32ND AVENUE TRAFFIC OPERATIONS STUDY.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**MATTER OF SOLICITATION OF DESIRED WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2009-2010
ANNUAL UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM**

Haugen reported that every two years MPO staff seeks recommendations as to what activities we should include in our Annual Unified Work Program. He stated that the projects included in the first year of the program are more or less set in stone, while the second year is reviewed towards the end of the first year in order to accommodate any projects that need to be continued from the first year, or to add, change, or delete any projects that have come to light since the program was developed.

Haugen commented that we do have to address the uncertainty of transportation funding, so we have established that we think we will have an annual budget around \$550,000, with \$300,000

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being available for the day-to-day activities, and \$250,000 being available for any requested activities we receive each year. He added that if anyone has a large project they would like to see done in 2010, we could hold some funds from 2009 to be used in 2010 for that project. He stated that the MPO itself has a long range plan that is in compliance with SAFETEA-LU, the Land Use Plan was recently updated, and no other plans are in need of being updated at this time, so at this time he isn't aware of any big activity that would eat up a large portion of the \$250,000.

Haugen referred to the packet and pointed out that he included examples of what the last two work programs looked like. He stated that he would ask two things: 1) if you have an activity you are interested in the MPO including in their program, please run it by him as soon as possible to determine if it is eligible for funding; and 2) please make sure your activity is submitted as a request from your city council, county government, or whoever is the lead agency, therefore please ensure you have enough time to take it through the approval process necessary to do so.

Boppre stated that he has two suggestions for discussion. He asked when the last time was that we flew the two cities for photos as there have been significant changes to both, so he would suggest that this be done soon. Haugen responded that that is already being discussed. Boppre asked if the cost would still be around \$40,000 to \$50,000. Haugen responded that that is what it cost last time, but they would have to get bids again this time. He added that they have also been discussing the fact that Lake Agassiz Water Authority is currently having aerial photos shot of the area, in greater detail than ours, so we would need to determine if their information would be available to us as well, which would mean we wouldn't have to do it ourselves. Boppre said that the other item he would like considered is GIS, particularly assisting the City of East Grand Forks in taking their GIS system to the next step. Haugen agreed that that would be something to consider. He suggested that they may want to get together to see what has already been done, what is available in terms of software already, and what they may need to accomplish the task.

Haugen stated that he would like to have the MPO Executive Policy Board in a position to adopt the 2009-2010 plan in November, so the local approval process will need to be done in October if at all possible.

Haugen commented that we have done a lot of school safety projects already, but they will most likely try to engage A.T.A.C. for one or two more, at a cost of about \$5,000. Durrenberger asked if any had been done in East Grand Forks. Haugen responded that there have not.

Haugen pointed out that we do have a smaller budget to work with than in the past, with approximately \$250,000 available for studies.

Durrenberger asked if specific solicitation letters would be sent out. Haugen responded that he would be sending letters out to elected official asking for project suggestions.

Information only.

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MATTER OF SOLICITATION OF 2010-2013 T.I.P. SELECTED PROGRAMS

Haugen pointed out that he included copies of some solicitation letters staff received from some of the programs already; including Safe Routes to School on both sides of the river and enhancement projects on the North Dakota side including Special Road Funds. He added that since the packets were mailed out North Dakota also sent a letter discussing the Urban Program.

Haugen reported that he has put a schedule together of when things are due on each side of the river. He distributed copies of that document, and went over it briefly, pointing out that the first two pages list North Dakota's timeline. He explained that they are currently soliciting for the enhancement safe routes which have a deadline different from other projects, specifically that they need to be submitted to staff by November 5th in order for the MPO to take the necessary action it needs to get it to the DOT by November 20th. He stated that they need to receive projects for the Urban Regional and Transit programs by December 3rd so they can be submitted to the DOT by the 15th of December. He said that they typically act on the draft T.I.P. document in April and the final in July or August.

Haugen stated that on the Minnesota Side everything is basically due at the same time, namely January, however we then get back into the same sequence as North Dakota with the draft T.I.P. being acted on in April and the final in July or August. He added, however, that, as discussed previously, the HSIP program on both sides of the river might have a different solicitation timeline.

Haugen explained that currently both sides are assuming a continuation of funding levels such as those we experienced in 2008, and are assuming that congress will extend/renew SAFETEA-LU in its current form.

Haugen reminded everyone that the T.I.P. covers the entire study area, not just within the city limits, and regardless of the funding source, if it is a regionally significant project it should show up in the T.I.P./S.T.I.P.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. ITS Regional Architectural Meeting

Haugen reminded everyone that there is an ITS Regional Architectural meeting following this one at 3:00 for those interested in attending.

2. Update On Right-Of-Way Digital Photo Imaging

Haugen stated that it is his understanding that GoodPointe Technology are coming in the next two weeks to begin their process. Nelson responded that she has not received confirmation on

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that at this time. Haugen reported that they are under contract to do an update of all of our right-of-way photos this year.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2008, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:16 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant