

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE  
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Punky Beauchamp, Chairman, called the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:00 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Punky Beauchamp, Gary Malm, Don Dietrich (Proxy for Warren Strandell), Art Bakken, Greg Leigh, Marc DeMers (Proxy for Dick Grassel), Steve Adams, and Doug Christensen.

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

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Chairman Beauchamp declared a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2008, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY BAKKEN, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2008 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Leigh, Malm, Dietrich, DeMers, Bakken, Adams, and Beauchamp.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2008-2011 T.I.P. FOR THE I-29/DEMERS NORTHBOUND ACCELERATION LANE PROJECT**

Haugen referred to the staff report and pointed out that it states that the NDDOT has awarded the district some safety dollars to extend this acceleration lane, primarily for truck traffic that is heading northbound on I-29/DeMers.

Haugen reported that this project came through the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan public input process during a meeting with members of the trucking industry. He stated that this

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was one of the main improvements they said they would like to see occur on our system. He explained that the reason this project is being amended into the 2008-2011 T.I.P. even though it is a 2009 project is because by having it in a T.I.P. document it allows that federal funds can be used to pay for the project development process.

Haugen stated that the Technical Advisory Committee held a public hearing on this at their Wednesday meeting. He said that it was advertised in the local paper for ten days prior to that meeting, and allowed for public comments until noon Wednesday, but no comments were received.

Leigh asked for clarification on the location of this project. Haugen responded that if you take the loop off of DeMers, which goes up onto the bridge and then north over the bridge, right now that acceleration lane is standard for just a passenger type vehicle, so they are going to extend that lane further north to allow truck traffic to get up to speed before they have to merge into traffic.

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY BAKKEN, TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2008-2011 T.I.P. FOR THE I-29/DEMERS NORTHBOUND ACCELERATION LANE PROJECT.***

***Voting Aye: Leigh, Malm, Dietrich, DeMers, Bakken, Adams, and Beauchamp.  
Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT 2009-2012 T.I.P.**

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that the complete draft document was included for review. He explained that we will need to adopt a final T.I.P. document in July or August.

Haugen stated that the Draft T.I.P. document was made available to the public ten days prior to the public hearing, which was held at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday. He explained that there were three changes made to the T.I.P. tables, and that copies of the corrected tables were distributed earlier. He referred to those tables, and went over the changes briefly as follows.

1. Grand Forks Project #3 – DeMers Avenue Skyway Bridge. Haugen pointed out that the project cost changed from \$2.875 million to \$3.5 million.
2. Grand Forks Project #22 – Reconstruction of southbound lane of I-29 between 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the Thompson interchange. Haugen reported that this project is in our current 2008-2011 T.I.P. but when the State of North Dakota submitted the list of projects they had identified for federal funds it was not included so it was brought up at the Technical Advisory Committee where it was determined that it is still a funded project and does need to be included in the Draft 2009-2012 T.I.P.
3. East Grand Forks Project #7 – Extend new roadway west across the coulee to a new intersection with Bygland Road. Haugen reported that is the final payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. HPP project.

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Haugen referred to the last sheet of the information distributed and explained that it lists some concerns the MPO has with the funding process. He stated that at the Technical Advisory Committee discussion was held regarding some of these concerns, specifically that the MPO isn't always included in all of the funding processes, and we wanted to remind the DOT that we do need to be involved. He added that the concern is that because the MPO is trying to develop financially constrained documents, when the two states have changes in their funding amounts, such as North Dakota telling us that they actually have more funds available, and Minnesota telling us that they may have less funds available, it makes it difficult to accomplish this.

Haugen stated that with these three changes, the Technical Advisory Committee and MPO staff recommend approval of the Draft 2009-2012 T.I.P..

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY MALM, TO APPROVE THE DRAFT 2009-2012  
T.I.P. SUBJECT TO THE REQUESTED CHANGES.***

***Voting Aye: Leigh, Malm, Dietrich, DeMers, Bakken, Adams, Beauchamp, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS APPLICATION FOR THE  
TRANSPORTATION REVOLVING LOAN FUND**

Haugen reported that this is another funding program that MNDOT has established. He explained that basically what happened was that MNDOT took some federal seed monies back in the 1990s and put them into a loan repayment program, which allows cities to borrow funds to do projects, and then once those monies are paid back they can be used by other cities for their projects as well.

Haugen stated that the City of East Grand Forks is applying for these monies to urbanize 23<sup>rd</sup> Street S.W.. He commented that because this is federal program it needs to follow the federal process, which involves review by the MPO Executive Policy Board to determine whether or not the project is consistent with it's Comprehensive Plan, and, if there were other applications to determine prioritization of the projects, but since there is only the one that is not really an issue.

Leigh asked what the correct process is when applying for funding for a project. He explained that it appears there was a slight problem between the agencies involved when trying to find funds for this project, and he would like to know if an agency should come before the MPO first, or should they do the application first and then come to the MPO. Haugen responded that this particular application is one that we have never submitted before, therefore we haven't really gone through this process yet, but what MNDOT identified for us to follow does not require that benefit/cost analysis be submitted with the application. He said that this information was shared with us only last Monday, so if there was friction it was only a matter of miscommunication between the various agencies involved.

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY BAKKEN, TO APPROVE THE EAST GRAND  
FORKS APPLICATION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION REVOLVING LOAN FUND.***

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*Voting Aye: Leigh, Malm, Dietrich, DeMers, Bakken, Adams, Beauchamp, and Christensen.  
Voting Nay: None.*

Haugen reported that if funds are awarded for this project staff will need to do an amendment to the T.I.P. document. He pointed out that it is currently shown as an illustrative project, and once a funding source is known for an illustrative project, it needs to be programmed.

**MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON FUTURE OF KENNEDY AND SORLIE BRIDGES**

Haugen reported that two weeks ago MNDOT officials met with East Grand Forks officials, while at the same time North Dakota officials also met in a separate meeting. He explained that one of the discussion points was the future of the Kennedy and Sorlie Bridges.

Haugen stated that the discussion on the bridges began when an East Grand Forks City Council member brought up the fact that the Kennedy Bridge does not have very good pedestrian access. He said that Lynn Eaton, MNDOT, made a very definitive statement about the replacement of both the Kennedy and Sorlie bridges occurring at specific timeframes, which was, so to speak, a “bombshell” to those in attendance. He stated that he did e-mail that information to everyone at the time, however we have since received further clarification from Mr. Eaton, and copies of that have just been distributed for everyone’s review.

Haugen referred to the information distributed, the third page, and pointed out that it states the actual plans of action for both the Kennedy and Sorlie bridges. He stated that it indicates that the Sorlie bridge is scheduled to be painted in 2015, with a possible mill and overlay of the decking occurring at the same time; and the Kennedy bridge is scheduled to be repainted and re-decked in 2017, but neither are scheduled, nor are there any plans to replace either one of those at this time.

Haugen reported that part of what Mr. Eaton was discussing at the meeting was the fact that these are both fracture critical structures, and there is a desire, on the Minnesota side, and on the North Dakota side if they could, to replace all of these types of bridges, but neither side has the funding available at this time to do that. He added that these two structures are, from all inspections performed to-date, sound structures, although the Kennedy bridge does have one pier that is slipping towards the river. He said that they did have identified in December a request for \$1,000,000 to repair that pier, but they are now looking to see if there is something else that can be done with it in the short term until 2017 when the other maintenance work is scheduled to occur.

Haugen commented that while there are no plans to replace either structure at this time, additional analyses are being done now, so there is always a possibility that that could change should structural problems be discovered with either of the structures, or should funding become available. He added that another thing that Mr. Eaton mentioned was, before we go and do the rehabbing of these structures, if we do want to discuss the possibility of replacing either, or both of them, now would be the time to begin the steps required for replacement.

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Leigh asked if it wasn't also discussed that if the cost of rehabbing the structures reaches costs nearing those of replacement, replacement should be looked at seriously. Haugen responded that that was correct. He added that they just had a similar situation occur when rehabbing the Point Bridge, but it was found at that time that the cost of rehabbing was still less than replacement.

Haugen stated that the bridge engineers from MNDOT, and officials from NDDOT were present at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, and this issue was discussed thoroughly, with the results being that barring any major structural issues coming to light, the Sorlie will continue to be scheduled for repainting and possible deck overlay in 2015; and the Kennedy for repainting and re-decking in 2017.

Haugen commented that the last bit of discussion held at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting covered the issue of, should the bridges be replaced, at what elevation should they be built to. He stated that the Kennedy, on the Minnesota side, would be easy to raise up, but it would be a little more difficult on the North Dakota side because of the existing approach and properties still located there. He added that as for the Sorlie bridge, the utopian approach would be to raise it up, but because the flood protection project was designed and built with that obstruction there, the reality is that it most likely would be built at a similar elevation as it is today.

Beauchamp commented that he just can't imagine closing the Kennedy bridge, specifically how it will affect the east/west traffic flow. Haugen responded that last year the MPO did do that Bridge Incident Management Plan, and while it was primarily initiated to deal with flood closure issues, we also covered various closure scenarios for maintenance as well, so we do have a detour routing plan, and a plan for re-sequencing our traffic lights to accommodate traffic changes, so we do have a kind of plan available for just such things as closing these structures down.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2008, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:13 P.M.***

***Voting Aye: Leigh, Malm, Strandell, Grassel, Bakken, and Adams.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant