

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the February 13th, 2008, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:40 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: James Bittman, MNDOT-Bemidji; Jane Williams, Grand Forks Traffic Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planner; Charles Durrenberger (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planner; Paul Benning, NDDOT-Bismarck (via conference call); Brad Bail (proxy for Dean Wieland), East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; and Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, MPO Executive Director; Teri Nelson, MPO Planner; and Peggy McNelis, MPO Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Troy Schroeder, NWRDC; and Richard Tebinka and Frieder Aldinger, MMM Group.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen stated that because there are some new faces here today he would ask that everyone please introduce themselves.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 9TH, 2008 MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY BAIL, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 9TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY FINAL
REPORT**

Haugen reported that attached to the staff report, included in the packet, was a copy of the final report minus the appendices. He stated that Nancy Ellis is the project manager for this study and will now give a brief overview of the results of the study.

Ellis commented that we did receive the final document from JLG, the consulting firm who performed the study, and, in addition to including it in today's meeting packet, placed it on the MPO's website as well.

Ellis referred to the report and explained that it basically discusses the corridor as it is today, and then offers recommendations on what could be done to improve the corridor in the future.

Ellis stated that there are three main concepts listed. She said that the first concept involves a width reduction of the frontage roads, and is located on pages 9 and 10 of the report. She explained that what this concept does is to provide a number of different amenities to the area including the creation of a boulevard, with various types of landscaping; space for pedestrians and bicyclists; areas for transit stops; as well as some additional safety features including lighting, crosswalks, etc..

Ellis reported that the second concept would involve enhancing the mainline highway. She explained that this concept does not involve the reduction of any lanes or the removal of any traffic control devices at this time, but it does involve improvements to the aesthetics of the corridor including decorative lighting and banners, landscaped boulevards between the mainline and the frontage roads, more visible pedestrian crossings, burial of overhead power lines, and the construction of gateway treatments at town entrances and key intersections.

Ellis commented that in addition to the corridor study an extensive traffic report was done, and is included in the appendices. She pointed out that the traffic study discusses things such as traffic safety analyses, projected traffic volumes, an access management plan, and crash rates at each intersection.

Ellis stated that the third concept involves ways to enhance the private sector, and would be primarily planning driven. She explained that some of the things discussed here include ordinance revisions, ordinance overlay districts, more intense screening for the storage and equipment located in the area, and cleaning up the land use in order to make it more use specific and limiting industrial uses.

Ellis reported that once the three concepts were developed they placed the recommendations in a phasing plan, located on page 33 of the report. She explained that the phasing plan follows a similar design as our current maintenance plan, and should the City choose to adopt this plan, and they want to look at reducing the width of the frontage road and adding some pedestrian and

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

bikeway areas this would be the time to do it, when maintenance of those frontage roads is deemed necessary rather than special assessing improvements prior to a need for maintenance.

Ellis stated that the phasing plan also discusses ways that we can improve the landscaping when those types of things should be done, as well as potential funding sources that we can seek to pay for those improvements.

Ellis referred to page 35 of the report, and pointed out that it is the costing plan. She explained that this information was obtained from Floan-Sanders and it discusses various construction costs. She stated that the corridor element costs encompass such landscaping items as trees, flowers, bushes; pedestrian level lighting; transit shelters; banners; monuments; etc., and gives us an idea as to what some of those amenities might cost us should we decide to put them in so that we can budget for them.

Ellis referred to page 36 of the report, and pointed out that it shows the concrete paving estimates for the frontage roads.

Ellis reported that the final section of the report discusses the next steps; communication of the vision; preparation of an implementation plan; development of request for proposals for re-development; and seeking potential funding opportunities.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Haugen commented that staff did work with a Steering Committee, who met on several occasions. Ellis agreed, adding that the Steering Committee does recommend adoption of the plan.

Haugen stated that one financial opportunity that was identified, but doesn't seem to be included in the report, was state aid funds. Ellis responded that she was told that this corridor is not eligible for state aid funding, that we can use maintenance monies but not actual state aid monies. Bail agreed, adding that MNDOT frowns on using maintenance monies on a non-state aid roadway, but it can be done.

Haugen asked if some of the trail development and other amenities could be parceled out for funding. Bail responded that they could do that if necessary.

Haugen reported that this study began last May and Ms. Ellis and the team have done a very good job coming up with a plan that addresses the issues that were requested be addressed. He added that the Steering Committee did endorse this project, and they, along with staff is recommending that the Technical Advisory Committee approve forwarding a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board that they approve the final report as submitted.

MOVED BY BAIL, SECONDED BY BITTMAN, THAT THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

***BOARD THAT THEY GRANT FINAL APPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL AVENUE
CORRIDOR STUDY FOR CENTRAL AVENUE (STATE HIGHWAY 220) IN EAST GRAND
FORKS, MINNESOTA, AS SUBMITTED.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ellis explained about the concerns the City of East Grand Forks and the adjacent property owners have with this study, particularly their inability to understand that this is a 25-year plan, not a plan that needs to be implemented immediately. She stated, therefore, that while the cost of doing the entire project now would be about \$6,000,000, the plan suggests spreading those costs over a 25-year time period and doing the entire project in increments, not everything at once, and that is something that we need to try to get across to everyone.

**MATTER OF COLLECTOR INTERSECTION TRAFFIC CONTROL STRATEGY
STUDY**

Haugen commented that late last year the firm MMM-Group, out of Winnipeg was hired to do a collector intersection traffic control strategy study for us. He said that Richard Tebinka, from the MMM-Group is here today to give us a brief overview of that study.

Haugen reported that he did include copies of the staff report, the presentation, and open house material in the packets. He added that he also sent out an e-mail alerting everyone to the fact that two open houses concerning this item will be taking place this evening.

Haugen referred to the staff report and pointed out that one of the things to be discussed today is the issue of roundabouts; their design, types, and particularly whether or not it is something we might want to consider.

Tebinka referred to the power point presentation (a copy of which is included in the packets and available upon request) and reiterated that there will be two open houses this evening, one focusing more on the northern half of the city and the other on the southern half of the city, although information on both areas will be available at each of the meetings.

Presentation ensued.

Tebinka explained that they started this study late in 2007. He stated that they did site visits; collected material from the MPO including collision and traffic data; did operational analyses at all the intersections; did collision analyses using the data available; and projected traffic to 2035 using information from NDDOT's website, historical trends, and the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan which included forecasts on the arterial system; did an environmental scan; and are now starting to look at all the alternatives available for consideration to help control traffic issues at the collector/collector intersections throughout the area using this information.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

Tebinka reported that once traffic at a collector/collector intersection can no longer be controlled with either a two-way or four-way stop, the only two options the city has for consideration are traffic signals or roundabouts. He stated that there are a couple of collector/collector intersections that are currently using traffic signals for traffic control, but there not any roundabouts being used at any of the intersections at this time.

Tebinka referred to the document included in the packet and pointed out that page four shows the northside intersections and page five shows the southside intersections. Haugen commented that the intersection of 24th and 34th shows a fourth leg that doesn't currently exist on the southern portion of that intersection. He explained that the reason they included the additional leg was to accommodate a conceptual proposed development in that area even though it hasn't officially been submitted to the city at this time. He said that by doing this they prevent any future problems should that development occur. Tebinka added that they also did this to determine whether or not the proposed development can be accommodated without hindering the intersection.

Tebinka referred to pages six, seven, eight and nine and pointed out that they show the collision data for the various intersections. He went over the information briefly.

Tebinka continued with the presentation, going over each of the traffic control options that may be available for collector/collector intersections, explaining the pros and cons of each versus the other. He stated that in terms of roundabouts they are really focusing purely on their traffic control options. He explained that some jurisdictions will consider roundabout for non-traffic control options, specifically using them as a traffic calming measure and/or a gateway feature. He stated that some of the ones that have been built in Fargo within the last year or so have been done more for their gateway and traffic calming features than their traffic control.

Haugen commented that this discussion on roundabouts is one of the reasons the study was delayed. He explained that when staff first recommended the hiring of the MMM Group to do this study to the MPO Executive Policy Board, and this is not a reflection on the firm, because one of the tools being offered was roundabouts, the Executive Policy Board expressed some reservation as to whether or not the City of Grand Forks was ready for the introduction of roundabouts and asked staff to take the issue back to both Planning Commissions to get their feedback as to whether or not roundabouts should be considered. This, then, delayed the study a month to 45-days. He stated that the result of this was that as long as roundabouts were not the only option for consideration, that other options were considered in the study as well, it would be fine to include them, which, of course was the intent of the study all along.

Tebinka distributed photos of roundabouts, and a brief discussion ensued.

Tebinka referred to page fifteen of the document and stated that it illustrates the level of service analysis they did at the various intersections. He went over the information briefly, explaining that their target, unless the MPO or City feels differently, would be a Level of Service C or better, and until at least 2035 only two intersections appear to be of any concern, 24th and 34th

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

and 24th and Cherry, both of which have a movement that is at a Level of Service F. He said that they will be looking at options for each to help correct that, and it may be something as simple as minor lane widening or re-stripping to create two lanes at the intersection itself, or it may require traffic signals or a roundabout.

Tebinka continued, explaining that they first need to determine if a roundabout is actually feasible, and it appears that there are really only two northern locations that a roundabout could potentially be constructed; 6th Avenue North and Stanford Road and 8th Avenue North and 20th Street North, however, based on traffic level of service at this time, neither is currently warranted. He also pointed out that of these two locations, the one at 8th Avenue North and 20th Street North would require the purchase of additional property in order to construct a roundabout. He stated that there are several possible southern locations; 11th Avenue South and 34th Street South, 13th Avenue South and 20th Street South, 8th Avenue South and Cherry Street, 13th Avenue South and Cherry Street, 24th Avenue South and 34th Avenue South, 40th Avenue South and 20th Street South, Ruemmele Road and 34th Street South, 40th Avenue South and Cherry Street, 55th Avenue South and Cherry Street, and 24th Avenue South and Cherry Street, but, again, based on traffic level of service at this time, none are currently warranted.

Tebinka referred to the aerial photos of each possible location and went over them briefly. He explained that while technically they would all be feasible, some would require considerable property be purchased in order to construct it at that location, therefore, some would be more feasible than others.

Tebinka stated that what they did, in terms of the roundabouts, was to take the roundabout that was shown in the transportation plan, at the intersection of 24th Avenue South and 34th Avenue South, which has a 60-foot radius, and, because that large of a roundabout may not work at every intersection, created a compact roundabout with a 54-foot radius. He stated that they constructed the compact roundabout at a couple of locations in Fargo, and they seem to work just fine.

Discussion on roundabouts, specifically design of, questions about, and concerns with, ensued.

Tebinka reiterated that they aren't suggesting that a roundabout be put in right away, but are instead looking at the issue of whether or not they would be a viable traffic control feature in the event the City of Grand Forks decides they would like to put one in, whether they are physically feasible, and whether they are needed. He said that what they are saying at this time is that at least eleven of the thirteen possible locations do not need them from a traffic control standpoint, and the other two still need work done to determine if they can reduce the level of service or not.

Haugen stated that one thing they were looking for from this technical group is the determination on whether or not there is enough of a difference between a regular roundabout with a 60-foot radius versus a compact roundabout with a 54-foot radius to really make a difference. Tebinka responded that there really isn't a "standard" roundabout as each roundabout will be designed specifically for the intersection in which it is being placed.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

Noehre commented that in addition to need, there are also some cost benefits with a roundabout versus a traffic signal. Tebinka agreed, adding that while the initial cost of putting in a roundabout may seem higher than putting in a traffic signal, the cost of maintaining and running traffic signals over a period of time would actually be higher than the cost of putting in the roundabout, plus when the power goes out the roundabout still works.

Haugen stated that maybe the question we need to ask, then, is whether or not there is enough leeway to consider a varying radius in the event that it is the preferred solution for a specific intersection rather than having roundabout with set radii. Williams asked if the State of North Dakota was going to come up with any kind of design for roundabouts. Benning responded that they did consider this issue when they were looking at possibly putting one in in Bismarck a while back, but nothing has been done to-date. Williams asked if the state would have any kind of minimum design standards set for this or will they be considered on a case-by-case basis. Benning responded that he thinks they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. He added that the need for right-of-way will be one thing that will need to be considered and what is accepted by the AASHTO guidelines another.

Haugen stated that the main reason for the discussion on roundabouts today was to determine if we want to consider roundabouts with a reduced radius or not. Williams said that that was why she was asking Mr. Benning if there would be any standards created by the State of North Dakota on this issue, because she doesn't know if there is a maximum or minimum size. Benning responded that he would check with the State's Design Division, but at this time he doesn't think any standards have been set for roundabouts. Noehre suggested that they leave the smaller radius roundabouts as an option as the design for each intersection will dictate the radius allowed.

Williams asked if the warrants for a roundabout is the same as for a four-way stop, if you look at a roundabout before installing a four-way stop. Tebinka responded that you would look at a roundabout when a four-way stop no longer can handle the traffic, before you would look at a signal. He pointed out that a lot of jurisdictions have established a policy that a roundabout will be considered in lieu of a traffic signal and a traffic signal is only considered if a roundabout is determined not to be feasible. Williams explained that she asked this because it would seem that the most ineffective method of traffic control is a four-way stop because once one is put in, everyone has to stop and traffic backs up in every direction. Tebinka agreed, adding that you could make it policy that a roundabout be considered in lieu of a four-way stop or a signal as a traffic control option, but the cost difference between a four-way stop and a roundabout is quite extensive so he wouldn't think that would be very well received, however it is something that could be required in new developments if desired. Haugen commented that you could look at this in terms of how in the past we had to fight tooth and nail to get developers to put bike trails in, and now they are deemed an amenity to the development, so maybe roundabouts will be thought of in that same manner someday as well.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

Public meetings this evening are as follows:

4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Valley Middle School on North 20th Street
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Century Elementary School on 17th Avenue South

Also the public has until 12:00 noon on February 20th to submit comments as well.

Haugen reported that when this issue was submitted to both Planning Commissions for their input on roundabouts a MNDOT informational video on roundabouts was played on Channel 2. He added that for the main department heads a power point document on roundabouts, located on the City's "H" drive, is available for review as well.

Information only.

**MATTER OF MNDOT 15% REDUCTION IN FY2009 FEDERAL FUNDING
SCENARIO**

Haugen reported that MNDOT has asked all of its ATPs to consider, and submit back to them, a plan on how they would handle a possible 15% reduction in federal highway funds.

Haugen referred to the staff report and pointed out that he indicated that he would forward any information concerning this to everyone. He stated that he did in-fact e-mail a letter he received on Monday. He added that he also just distributed a paper copy as well.

Haugen commented that he first mentioned that back in November 2007, but our ATP met for the first time since the memo came out last Thursday. He stated that it was determined that they would meet again in two weeks to try to draft a response to OIM. He pointed out that the request only focuses on federal fiscal year 2009, and as shown in the memo from OIM they have projected levels of funding for 2010, 2011, and 2012, so they have either accounted for a reduction in 2009 or they don't perceive a need for reduction in those years, but in any event we were only directed to consider 2009.

Haugen stated that he has not yet figured out why the magic number of 15-percent was used, but for our MPO area this issue really won't impact us as there is only one project that uses highway funds in 2009 in our MPO area. Bittman reported, however, that possible places it could impact us would be transit. He explained that even though we may not show any transit projects in 2009, there could be a trickle down effect and later years could be impacted even if there isn't any impact in 2009.

Haugen asked what the deadline is for us to get our response in for the ATIP. Bittman responded that when they send in their draft ATIP to OIM, only the bottom 15-percent of the dollars are shown. Haugen stated that they hope to have a decision on this by the 21st, but we may need to meet again in May first. He added that there would be minimum risk to the MPO here .

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

Haugen asked if North Dakota was contemplating doing anything like this as well. Benning responded that he has not heard anything at this time.

MATTER OF NDDOT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOPS

Haugen referred to the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute workshop brochure and explained that UGPTI and others will be going to eight locations throughout North Dakota to discuss the whole transportation infrastructure and it's condition, but mostly just to make people aware of the funding crisis that is looming over transportation.

Haugen commented that the Grand Forks workshop will be on April 2, 2008 at the Hilton Garden Inn from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with lunch provided.

MATTER OF AARP ND TRANSIT COORDINATION SUMMIT

Haugen referred to the letter from AARP announcing a statewide meeting on Human Services Transit Coordination. He stated that it is put on by AARP and the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) which is a sub area of the UGPTI at the North Dakota State University and will take place on April 9, 2008, which is the same date as our April Technical Advisory Committee meeting, so we may lose some members to this meeting instead.

Haugen stated that he talked to Bruce Fuchs, the Transit Coordinator to North Dakota Department of Transportation, and was told that this isn't really something his office is doing, but for those who are familiar with the Human Services Coordination Plan the MPO did, there is a statewide group of people that will also be meeting on this issue in the near future so we do have some options on the North Dakota side.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Listing of Obligations

Haugen reported that there were several additional things he wanted to cover today but simply didn't have the time to get the information together in time, but one thing he does want to highlight is our listing of obligations. He stated that he does need to work with several key people here to finalize our Listing of Obligations by getting the actual obligated funding for 2007 projects. Benning responded that he would get that information out as soon as possible.

2. SAFETEA-LU Letter

Haugen reported that he is working on the issues listed in the letter from Mr. Benning regarding SAFETEA-LU compliance. He stated that he did ask for some clarification and received that information from Mr. Benning so will continue to work on the transit section, otherwise everything else has been addressed and will be brought to the March meeting for a public meeting.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**

3. Bittman Transferred

Bittman stated that it appears that this may be his last Technical Advisory Committee meeting as he is being promoted. He added that Greg Gilbertson will most likely be taking his place. Haugen thanked Mr. Bittman and said that we appreciate his service to the Technical Advisory Committee but will wait for the official announcement.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY WILLIAMS, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 13TH, 2008, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 3:17 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant