

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 8th, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the October 8th, 2008, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:36 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Dean Rau, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks Planner; Stacey Hanson, NDDOT-Bismarck (via conference call); Teri Nelson (proxy for Dale Bergman), GF/EGF MPO/EGF Transit; and Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Executive Assistant.

Guests present were: Heather Kienitz (via conference call), SHE Consultants.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

A quorum was not present. Haugen stated that we can either adjourn or stay and discuss the items, but cannot take action. Consensus was to stay and hold discussion.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen asked that everyone please introduce themselves.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Haugen stated that because a quorum was not present, no action can be taken on the September 10th, 2008, minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Haugen reported that an announcement has been made that Mark Johnson, FHWA-Bismarck, has accepted a position with the Federal Highway Department in West Virginia. He said that no date has been given as to when Mr. Johnson's last day will be at this time.

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SUSPEND AGENDA

Haugen stated that he would like to suspend the agenda at this time in order that Heather Kienitz from SEH can give a brief overview on the East Grand Forks Parking Survey and the potential conversion of the one-way pairs of North 3rd and North 4th Streets in Grand Forks, which are both components of the Downtown Plan Update that is currently being done.

MATTER OF DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE

Kienitz referred to a power point presentation on the East Grand Forks Parking Survey that was done recently as part of the Downtown Plan Update (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request), and went over it briefly.

Kienitz explained that a parking study similar to this was done in Grand Forks, which is why they were asked to do one in East Grand Forks as well. She stated that they asked the MPO to give them an inventory of spaces in the downtown area from 4th Street N.W. to the river in order for them to garner information to help determine where there might be some redevelopment opportunities, and to identify demand and supply in the area they are most concerned with for redevelopment.

Presentation ensued.

Kienitz referred to a map illustrating the location of both on-street and off-street parking in the downtown area and explained that on-street spaces are shown with letters and parking lots are identified with numbers. She pointed out that there are 258 on-street and 782 off-street spaces in the area.

Kienitz stated that it was decided that data should be gathered on a weekday, and on one day of the weekend, therefore data was gathered on Tuesday, September 9th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; and on Saturday, September 6th from 6:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.. She referred to slides illustrating the results of those counts and went over them briefly.

Kienitz reported that one thing MPO staff noticed during the survey was that the two-hour parking restriction in Area C, which is on the northeast side of the mall, was not being adhered to, and, in-fact was being used by employees. She added that the one-hour parking restriction in Area E, in front of the Mall and Cabelas, was also being violated during the day. Boppre stated that, after complaints were received from tenants concerning the fact that the two-hour parking restriction in Area E was being violated, City Council, at their meeting a couple of weeks ago determined that it should be signed as one-hour parking and be self-policed. He added that he drove by Areas 1 and 3 this past weekend, and he thinks it is indicative of what is happening where and when, such as when new movies come out, or what a restaurant might be offering in terms of specials or entertainment, as to how full the parking lots are at any given time.

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Boppre stated that it appears that the results indicate that we have adequate parking, however it may not be located exactly where patrons would like as most people want to park as close to their destination as they possibly can.

Kienitz pointed out that the truck parking lot only had one truck use it. Boppre responded that one is better than none. He added that that parking lot was built with EDHA funds after the flood, and the City is looking at changing it to a regular parking lot once the grant timeframe expires.

Kienitz commented that Lot 4, Cabela's lot, was less than 50% occupied during both surveys, so you might consider looking at the possibility of utilizing it for something other than just parking, such as a parking structure with either a business or housing on top of it. Boppre stated that whatever is suggested there would have to be cleared with Cabelas since they own the lot.

Kienitz stated that one thing that will need to be done is to talk about how they can help the City and the MPO establish some parking management guidelines that will serve the interests that are agreed upon for the downtown plan; what the goals of the downtown plan are, and how can parking serve those goals; and then they can come up with some recommendations for creating signage to help guide people on where parking is available.

Boppre commented that Ms. Kienitz has kind of gotten him thinking about the Cabelas parking lot, and what could possibly be done there, such as maybe putting in a parking ramp with something on top of it like apartments or a restaurant, or such, however this could be an issue with Cabelas as he would think they like for people to be able to see their building from all angles, but it is something to think about. Kienitz agreed, adding that in terms of Cabelas, by putting the structure to the rear of the lot it would still allow for the public to see Cabelas from all angles.

Boppre stated that he thinks the information given today is very helpful, and he would like to thank SEH, and the MPO staff for putting it together.

Haugen asked that Ms. Kienitz give a brief overview on the issue of one-way pair conversion of North 3rd and North 4th Streets in Grand Forks. Kienitz asked that Mr. Haugen give a brief history on these one-way streets before she began her power point presentation.

Haugen reported that the one-way pairs of North 3rd and North 4th Streets in Grand Forks have a long history. He stated that they were implemented back in the 1960's in response to the Kennedy Bridge and realignment of US 2 as a way to keep traffic moving up and down from US 2 through the Downtown area. He said that through the decades the issue of converting these roadways back to two-way traffic has been discussed, but has been defeated each time, however this past year the neighborhood held some charrettes, and asked that this possibility be looked at again so it was included as a component of the Downtown Plan Update.

Kienitz stated that the first thing they needed to do was to gather some data to help them understand what was going on with these streets; how they were operating in terms of speed,

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what the volume of traffic is, etc.. She referred to a power point presentation and went over it briefly.

Presentation ensued.

Kienitz commented that a concern was raised as to what happens once they get to the intersections of North 3rd and North 4th and Gateway Drive in terms of operation. She referred to drawings of those intersections, and pointed out that the skew for North 4th is similar to that of North 5th, but added that North 5th happens to have a signal.

Kienitz referred to the drawing of the intersection of North 3rd and Gateway, and pointed out that it shows that it is 26-foot wide, which is quite narrow. She stated that they ran a turning movement analysis, and found that it could work when dealing with passenger vehicles, but, while vehicles don't quite overlap each other, they are quite close and there is a potential for sideswiping to occur, and that certainly increases when dealing with larger vehicles, and would definitely occur when dealing with semi trucks.

Kienitz referred to the drawing of the intersection of North 4th and Gateway, and pointed out that it isn't quite a narrow at 34-feet, so would work better in terms of turning movements, particularly passenger vehicles. She added, however, that taking a left onto Gateway would be a little awkward. She stated that there isn't any concern with vehicles turning onto North 4th from Gateway, but the northbound right turn from North 4th towards the bridge does cause some concern as those vehicles may impose on the left turn lane from Gateway onto North 4th. She reported that they ran an analysis for North 5th Street as well, and they have the same issue happening there as well.

Kienitz referred to a slide discussing other considerations, and stated that, as previously mentioned regarding North 5th Street, we see pretty much the same at North 4th Street in terms of the turning template analysis, with the exception being a difference in the site issues of the northbound left turn lanes. She explained that you have right-of-way on 5th but none on 4th, therefore 4th is the more challenging roadway to change to a two-way.

Kienitz commented that they also gathered some crash data at each intersection. She referred to a slide illustrating crash information and went over it briefly.

Kienitz reported that in terms of alternative considerations, at a previous meeting, Les Noehre and Jane Williams both expressed concerns with extending the two-way conversions all the way to Gateway, however they had not yet done either the speed analysis or the crash analysis at that point. She stated that they then discussed where a reasonable termini for the conversion should be, and it was determined that for North 3rd Street the termini should occur at 10th Avenue North; and for North 4th Street at 11th Avenue North. She added that this would then mean that instead of what we now see at University, it would be applied all the way down those streets so that those intersections could interact with Gateway the same as they do today, which would also mean we would have more circulation to the south.

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Kienitz said that one thing we need to think about is; with the dike running along North 3rd Street, and with the width close to University being about 52-feet wide and tapering down to about 37-feet wide at 8th Avenue, a parkway concept that will include a landscaped median, streetscape enhancements, a potential gateway with neighborhood signage, and opportunities to design and enhance the dike area along the river, should be considered for North 3rd Street, which would work better with a two-way operation.

Gengler asked, with this parkway concept, if we think about putting in a median, how wide will it be. Kienitz responded that she has not yet seen an actual cross-section yet, but if you want two 12-foot lanes, an 8- or 10-foot parking lane, you would need up to 35-feet, which should be no problem but it would need to be a tapered.

Haugen stated that the next slide discusses the public involvement process. Kienitz reported that the near north side held some charrettes, and ultimately requested that the issue of one-way to two-way conversion be explored. She stated that they met with the City's Service and Safety Committee and received their support to consider the conversion, including their agreement that a meeting be held with the neighborhood to discuss this possibility. She said that they let the near north neighborhood know that they confirmed consideration and that a public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 14th at 5:30 p.m., to which the neighborhood has been invited to attend. She added that a charrette has also been scheduled on Wednesday, October 15th for committee members, downtown business owners, and the public.

Kienitz briefly discussed the issue of signage, and some of the changes that may be required should this change occur.

Information only.

RESUME AGENDA

**MATTER OF PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF MN/4TH AVENUE CORRIDOR
STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Haugen reported that they have been working with the steering committee on this study, as well as with KLJ, the consulting firm hired to do the study.

Haugen referred to a copy of a presentation given to the steering committee and the Minnesota/4th Avenue neighborhood on September 30th, and went over it briefly.

Haugen stated that they had previously looked at curb extension as intersections, however they have proven not to be very practical, therefore they are no longer being considered. He said that they also looked at doing some features at some of the intersections utilizing some of the salvaged sandstone curbing, but we have since discovered that this curbing is precious and needs to be used as curb so that has also been rejected.

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Haugen said that they also looked at some different ways in which the intersection of Minnesota/4th could be modified with one option entailing bringing it to a more standard, four-legged 90-degree angle with medians; and another using the roundabout concept but having some one-ways circling into and out of it.

Haugen stated that their recommendations have been split into two options: 1) mitigation would be required because of the pavement being on the historical register, and 2) context sensitive solutions because this is in a designated historic district.

Haugen reported that for the pavement they recommend removing all of the existing granitoid and asphalt pavement along the corridor and replace it with stamped concrete. He stated that they do show examples of a similar project in Duluth. He said that they also, as part of the mitigation, will try to salvage sandstone curb that is four-feet in length or longer, and use them at the entry features at either end of the corridor. He added that they would use any remaining sandstone in other areas where needed along the corridor.

Haugen stated that they have begun working on an agreement between the City of Grand Forks, the Local Historic Society, and the State Historical Society on de-listing certain blocks of the granitoid and focusing more on the more pristine granitoid, or the more curb-to-curb complete sections, such as 2nd Avenue North.

Haugen commented that they need to display some sort of interpretive area together to give some history or people context on what the granitoid is all about. He referred to an example of what Duluth did with the granitoid they removed from their streets, which was to place it in a park. He pointed out that the consultants did come up with a possible design for our granitoid as well.

Haugen referred to slides illustrating the context sensitive recommendations and went over them briefly, pointing out that they are suggesting using pedestrian lighting that is aesthetically similar to the historic qualities of the corridor. He stated that another solution would be to blacken poles, either with paint or with sleeves to create a more uniform theme along the corridor.

Haugen pointed out that the two entrance features would include the sandstone curbing in the median, which will also provide some traffic calming effects as well. He added that they would also like to see some sort of entry signage identifying both the near southside historic district, and factioning in the granitoid. He stated that the consultants showed the concept illustrated on the slide during the discussion with the steering committee, as well as how they did a similar project in Bismarck, and did get the committee's attention.

Haugen reported that the MPO hired ATAC, in a separate study, to look at school crossings along this corridor, and they did provide their recommendations as well. He stated that KLJ will take those recommendations and modify them slightly because of the skewed crosswalks at Chestnut and 4th Avenue, for which they will shorten the crossing distance, and will add truncated domes, possibly in a brick color in order to be more sensitive to the aesthetics of the

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corridor. He said that there are also some sidewalks that need to be updated, although there has been considerable replacement of sidewalks already along the corridor.

Haugen commented that for the intersection of Minnesota/4th a mini-roundabout concept is the preferred recommendation, but if it is not pursued as an option, we would at least look at realigning the intersection to a 90-degree configuration.

Haugen referred to slides discussion construction cost and went over them briefly. He stated that they show a base construction cost of \$2,100,000 for an area not in a historic area; and then add on the additional costs for a historic area for a total of \$2,942,000. He said that because this is a functionally classified corridor it would be eligible for Urban Road funds, which would entail an 80/20 split.

Haugen reported that public comment period runs until October 14th. He stated that throughout the process they have been meeting with the Local Historic Preservation Commission, and they will be meeting again on October 14th as well. He said that they believe that that commission will support the recommendations since there was representative from the commission on the steering committee. He added that the steering committee will meet on October 16th to finalize the recommendations, receive input, and provide feedback to the comments received.

Rau commented that based on the project costs for recent projects the Engineering Department feels that the cost estimate may be too low. He explained that they also feel that the total cost should include the engineering costs as well, including the piece yard design, the plan design, and the construction engineering costs associated with the project. He pointed out that the \$2.1 and \$2.9 estimates are only the construction side of the project, and there are more costs involved that need to be accounted for as well. Haugen stated that it also appears that Grand Forks Engineering staff tried to answer what the special assessment district might look like as well. Rau agreed, adding that they still don't have a clear determination of the assessment district, but this is a pretty good guess.

Haugen reported that the steering committee will meet on October 16th, at which time it is hoped that they can finalize the study. He said that once the study has been finalized, it will need to be submitted to the Safety/Service Committee, then the City Council, so we will most likely be looking at presenting a final document to this body in November. He stated that it was hoped that, while there are still some issues with cost, the rest of the recommendations could have received preliminary approval from this body today, but since that was not possible he would ask that everyone please forward your comments to Nancy as soon as possible.

**MATTER OF REVISED MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
APPLICATION TIMELINE**

Haugen reported that last month it was thought that we had all the information needed to release the schedule for the T.I.P., however the A.T.P.-MNDOT District 2 decided they wanted to have T.E. applications submitted earlier in January than anticipated so for the Minnesota side, as

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included in the packet, a revision was required to the schedule. He referred to the schedule and pointed out that the last two pages show that T.E. projects are due to the MPO on the 3rd of December, not January 7th as was shown previously as MNDOT is now requiring they be submitted to them by January 9th.

Information only.

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

Haugen reminded the committee that the MPO is now in the process of putting together their 2009-2010 Annual Unified Work Program. He commented that there is about \$250,000 in funding available to do any studies/projects either city might be interested in having done.

Haugen referred to a slide illustrating some of the ideas that he has been made aware of from both cities. He went over those ideas briefly:

- 1) Grand Forks, in light of the 32nd Avenue Signal Coordination Study that was recently done, is anticipating requesting some additional corridors have signal coordination studies done as well.
- 2) As part of the signal coordination studies we should look at transit preemption as there are a couple of routes that are currently having a difficult time making their schedules, and possibly with some hardware/software updates we can assist them with that.
- 3) Consideration is being given to looking at some railroad crossing consolidations for the State Mill railroad lines.
- 4) Transit has identified examining route structures in 2010.
- 5) A.T.A.C. will again look at a couple of schools.
- 6) Aerial photos will be taken on both sides of the river.
- 7) East Grand Forks would like a study done for a new access to Crystal Sugar.
- 8) Pavement management revenue planning should be looked into.

Haugen stated that it is hoped that all work activities, with approval of the respective City Councils, be submitted by November 5th.

Boppre reported that there was a meeting last Friday to discuss what projects the City of East Grand Forks may be interested in submitting, and a list will be submitted to the City Council for their concurrence next Tuesday.

Haugen asked if Ms. Hanson had had a chance to look over the CPG estimates he sent. Hanson responded that she had not, but will do so as soon as possible and will get back to him at that time.

Haugen stated that the assumption is that the 2009 funding amount will be the same as 2008. He said that with the Highway Trust Fund fix it is expected that they will have all the funding

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necessary in 2009 to be able to implement SAFETEA-LU authorized levels of funding, which would mean an increase in funding in 2009 from 2008, but currently, through a continuing resolution they have appropriated funds only through March 6th of 2009, and that is at the 2008 level, so that is why we basically took our 2008 funding levels and continued them to 2009.

Haugen reported that the MPOs did agree to a new distribution formula, which would mean we would see an increase in funding, but because the NDDOT has decided they will be keeping some of the funds for themselves it will most likely mean no increase for us.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Because a quorum was not present, Chairman Haugen closed the meeting at 2:56 p.m..

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant