

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 9th, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-101**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the April 9th, 2008, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:33 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Kent Ehrenstrom, 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; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Les Noehre, NDDOT-Grand Forks; Ed Pavlish, NDDOT-Grand Forks; and Graig Gilbertson, MNDOT-Bemidji.

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

Guests present were: Troy Schroeder, NWRDC and Roger Hille, MNDOT.

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 MARCH 12TH, 2008 MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY BENNING, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 12TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Haugen reported that he had a slide presentation that gives a synopsis of the amendment request. He explained that the request involves the northbound portion of I-29 and the DeMers Avenue ramps, specifically to extend the acceleration lane.

Haugen stated that the project is in compliance with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and has essentially gone through a prioritization process for the Safety Program.

Haugen reported that we did advertise for a public hearing at today's meeting, therefore he will now open the public hearing for comments. He stated that because there is no one present for comments, he would now like to close the public hearing. He added that the public hearing notice also indicated that the public could submit comments via e-mail, regular mail, telephone, or in person by noon today, and no such comments were received.

Haugen commented that this project is programmed to occur in 2009, but the DOT asked that it be amended into the 2008-2011 T.I.P. rather than to wait for the 2009-2012 T.I.P. process. He explained that the reason for their request is because by it being in a current T.I.P. and S.T.I.P. document it becomes eligible for federal reimbursement of some of the project development costs. Noehre added that 2009 would still be the earliest that the project will occur, and it could actually be moved back depending on availability of funds.

Haugen stated that staff is recommending that the Technical Advisory Committee forward a recommendation to the MPO Executive Board that they approve the amendment to the 2008-2011 T.I.P. as submitted.

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY NOEHRE, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A
RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY
APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2008-2011 T.I.P. FOR THE I-29/DEMERS
AVENUE NORTHBOUND ACCELERATION LANE PROJECT.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Benning asked that three copies of the amended document, once approved, be sent to him for distribution.

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

Haugen reported that back in December the MPO submitted all of the project requests for funding. He stated that a couple of key things to note would be that the MPO's responsibility with these projects is to review them to make sure they are consistent with their planning documents, and then to prioritize the projects within the proposed funding programs.

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Haugen referred to a power point presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request), specifically a map illustrating the MPO Study Area, and pointed out that the study area includes any project located within the urbanized area (shown in dark gray), as well as those located within the lighter gray area, specifically if they are receiving federal funds or if they are regional projects.

Haugen referred to the power point presentation and went over the Minnesota projects for 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, specifically focusing on the Street and Highway Projects programmed. He stated that for the most part all of the projects shown in 2009, 2010, and 2011 have been programmed and have not been changed from our current T.I.P. document. He added that 2012 is the new-year, and pointed out that there are two new projects listed; one is a T.E. project on Central Avenue and the other is a project on Minnesota 220 south.

Haugen referred to the power point presentation, pointing out that it shows the list of projects submitted in December for North Dakota. He explained that the next few slides are going to compare what was submitted in December versus what is programmed in our current T.I.P. document, as there were some revisions made. He then went over the changes/additions to the T.I.P. for both Minnesota and North Dakota projects.

Benning commented that both the T.E. and the Safe Routes To School projects are both for 2009 and were just approved within the last couple of months.

Haugen stated that we are also assuming that, since we were not notified differently, we were not awarded any Safe Route To School infrastructure projects. Benning responded that that was correct.

Haugen referred to the Cherry Street reconstruction project, and pointed out that it is listed twice in the T.I.P. document. He explained that in 2009 it is shown as being funded with city funds, and is actually an advanced construction project; and then in 2010 it is shown again as that is when the federal payback will occur.

Haugen distributed copies of a letter from Paul Benning concerning the identification of urban projects for our area, and explained that there are a couple of corrections needed. He stated that in 2009 two projects need to be added: 1) the I-29 enhancement project between DeMers and 32nd Avenue, which is currently programmed under the T.E. program in our current T.I.P.; and 2) under safety we need to add the DeMers northbound acceleration lane project.

Benning commented that there is one other correction required for the second regional project, the DeMers Skyway Bridge project, due to new costs that have come in recently. He explained that the costs increased from \$2.9 million dollars to \$3.5 million dollars, with \$2.8 of that being federally funded.

Noehre pointed out that the T.E. project shows \$161,000 being federally funded, but he would rather see it shown as \$180,000 being funded until the final cost estimates are in.

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Haugen stated that he used the word “concerns” for those things that might have been handled better in a different way, such as the HSIP being funded outside of the process, etc., as it would have been nice to know how they are processed. Benning responded that the HSIP funds are processed through the involvement of their traffic engineer and their planning division in the development of a list of projects that have been submitted after soliciting the state. He stated that once solicitation is done a list of projects are put together based on the availability of funds, and then it is sent to their transportation program director for approval. Benning said that this was actually just completed within the last couple of weeks. He added that it is a little different than what is normally done with funding programming, but they are trying to get that more synchronized with everything else. Haugen commented that Minnesota has been having this same issue with their New Freedom, JARC, and Safe Routes To School programs as well, although JARC and New Freedom may have changed recently with the new application, but the Safe Routes To School program only requires that the applicant send a letter to the MPO indicating that they are applying, so, again, you may have more than one application for Safe Route To School funds and no way to know how it fits in with the MPO’s plan, nor what our prioritization might be, and that is a concern for the MPO. Ehrenstrom commented that every program he deals with; JARC, New Freedom, Transit, they do have to notify the MPO during the initial application process.

Haugen reported that Mr. Benning and he talked about the Urban Road program this morning. He said that they have seen a significant rise in the federal amount coming to Grand Forks, while there is a possible 15% decrease in East Grand Forks’ federal amount. Benning stated, however, that they have not yet seen their rescission dollars yet either, so that could change for them as well. Haugen commented that, we aren’t complaining about the additional monies, but would like to be notified of changes in funding earlier so it can be included in the T.I.P..

Benning referred to the third page of the enclosures that were included with his letter, Option 3, and explained that in 2000, when the 2000 census was done there were thirteen cities slated for funding. He stated that of those thirteen cities four showed an increase in population, and the remaining nine either remained constant or decreased, so the League of Cities, not the DOT, developed an equation they could use to appropriate monies to these cities. He explained how the equation worked.

Haugen referred to the fourth page of the enclosures, and pointed out that it lists the thirteen cities in North Dakota, the project(s) programmed for each, the year programmed, and the amount allocated.

Noehre referred to Page 33 of the T.I.P. document, and pointed out that the 2008 projects are missing approach slabs on DeMers and Gateway. Haugen asked if these were the ones that were programmed for 2007 but were delayed to 2008. Noehre responded that they did start out in 2007, were bid in 2007, but are programmed for 2008.

Durrenberger asked if anything is planned for changes to this for the 2010 Census as it would seem that if there isn’t anything done Fargo will end up getting the larger percentage of funds.

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Haugen commented that it might actually be West Fargo that might get more funds, and Fargo will stay the same. Benning responded that he hasn't talked about this with anyone from the League of Cities, but what he did was to tell the thirteen cities that they need to come up with an equation that everyone can agree with, and that is what he uses to calculate funding division.

Haugen reported that in the actual Draft T.I.P. document there are some corrections that need to be made. He said that everyone should have received his third attempt, via e-mail, to do this and he thinks that he got the North Dakota side corrected, but there are still some changes to be made to the Minnesota side. He referred to Page 20, the bottom line, and explained that they have roughly \$50,000,000 in projects programmed in North Dakota, with \$36,000,000 of that being federal funds.

Haugen referred to Page 24 of the Draft T.I.P., and explained that Project #7 should be changed from 2010 to 2009. He stated that this the last year of payback on the 13th Street project. He added that somewhere down the road this will probably be amended as part of the funding package.

Haugen stated that the last thing he would like to discuss, which will be addressed further with our next agenda item, is one project that is currently being showed as an illustrative project, and that is the reconstruction of 23rd Street N.W. from a rural section to an urban section between River Road and Central Avenue.

Ehrenstrom referred to Page 22, and pointed out that it should match the project description years to the actual years of expenditure.

Noehre reported that there should be another project listed in 2011, the Southbound lane reconstruction of I-29.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY WILLIAMS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE DRAFT 2009-2012 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO THE CHANGES AND ADDITIONS NOTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Haugen referred to the staff report and explained that the Transportation Revolving Loan Fund is part of the State Infrastructure Bank Program that was created back in 1995 with an amendment to ISTE. He said that East Grand Forks is applying for \$3.1 million dollars to urbanize 23rd Street N.W..

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Haugen reported that he also included a copy of the application in the packet, along with some maps that identify the location of the proposed project. He referred to Page 3 of the application, project evaluation information, and explained that information is included here that doesn't necessarily need to be attached to the application.

Haugen stated that staff is recommending that the Technical Advisory Committee forward a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board that the application is consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan, and that it be given a high priority ranking. He commented that the NWATP has already passed this application on with the same basic recommendation, but noting that it needed concurrence from the MPO, which may occur Friday.

Boppre reported that this is something the City of East Grand Forks has been asking him to look into, to find a way to urbanize this section, and back in January they actually received this request through the State. He added that he and Ms. Ellis have been working together on this, and they feel it is a worthy project for the City of East Grand Forks.

Boppre commented that anytime you put a planning document together you kind of forecast what you see for projects, and when you would actually use the funds received, and he won't actually start this project until next year and would use the state-aid allotment they receive to pay back this loan.

MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY GILBERTSON, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE EAST GRAND FORKS APPLICATION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION REVOLVING LOAN FUND.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON FUTURE OF KENNEDY AND SORLIE BRIDGES

Haugen reported that a week ago discussion occurred between MNDOT officials and East Grand Forks staff on various issues, including the future of the Kennedy and Sorlie bridges. He referred to the staff report included in the packet and explained that it includes a portion of the unapproved minutes from that meeting.

Haugen commented that after the meeting there were several phone calls and e-mails bantered about discussing what Lynn Eaton, MNDOT, said about the two bridges. He stated that Roger Hille, MNDOT and Les Noehre, NDDOT are here today to set things straight, and answer any questions anyone might have concerning this issue.

Gilbertson stated that their traffic engineer, Mike Kamnikar, was present at the meeting in question, and told him that in terms of the Kennedy bridge some of the things they are planning on possibly doing to discourage pedestrians from crossing it include scarifying the median so that people wouldn't be able to rollerblade on it; using signage, and ticketing those that still use it

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as a pedestrian crossing. He added that the plan is to implement these things in approximately a months time.

Boppre explained that the regular quarterly meeting was scheduled last week between MNDOT officials, the East Grand Forks City Council, and the Mayor in order that discussion could occur on any issues or concerns that any entity might have. He stated that a concern voiced by one of the City Council members regarding the issue of pedestrian safety on the Kennedy bridge was placed on the agenda and that is what precipitated the discussion on the bridges.

Noehre commented that after the issue was raised officials looked at the Kenney bridge, and it's history, and found that there aren't any bikepaths or sidewalks leading to or from the bridge on either side, nor are there any plans to create any.

Gilbertson stated that it is his understanding that no signage would be placed on the Kennedy bridge until approved by both DOTs. Noehre commented that the last conversation he had with Mr. Kamnikar he was going to place some tubes on the bridge. Boppre added that discussion was also held regarding the issue of whether or not signs are put on the bridge, are there any plans to make the bridge safer in the future, and that is what precipitated the comments regarding the fate of both bridges.

Hille said that at this time the plan is to rehab, and this is a joint plan between MNDOT and NDDOT, the Sorlie Bridge by giving it a paint job and an overlay in 2015; and then in 2017 basically the same thing would be done with the Kennedy, with the exception that they would also look at dealing with the issues that have occurred with one of the piers, and that they would re-deck it completely rather than just doing an overlay. He stated that this is what they had in their plans, and those plans were said and established before any bonding bill happened in the State of Minnesota, and is still the current plan at this time. He added that they do know that all of the bridges over the Red River are undergoing a detailed analysis right now to determine whether or not any of them have any critical fractures. He stated that, basically what this means is that, while at this time there aren't any plans to change the bridge maintenance schedule, should structural concerns arise with any of these bridges they could look at replacing them rather than rehabbing them.

Noehre commented that another issue that could affect whether or not one, or both of these bridges could be replaced rather than just rehabbed is cost. He explained that if the cost of painting and overlaying the bridges should become so high that it nears the cost of replacement, then they would certainly look at replacement instead.

Hille stated that we also need to keep in mind that there is still a chance that there could be monies left from the bonding bill, and if there is they would certainly look at bridges throughout the area. He added that the bridges at Oslo and Grafton both have lower sufficiency ratings, and are on the replacement list as well. He added that there are some substructure issues with the Kennedy that may require that we do a smaller fix for the time being, and wait until 2017 to

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determine whether or not the rehab project will allow for a more sufficient fix, and if not then look at replacement instead.

Williams asked when that bridge analyses will be completed. Hille responded that they should be done by the end of July.

Hille commented that when the time comes for replacement of these bridges, from a cost standpoint, they are going to think very, very hard about how they are going to deal with traffic issues. He stated that some of the things we will need to consider are: 1) will the MPO plan between now and then give us a corridor that we can use to get across the river safely; 2) assuming we will raise the profile on Highway 2 at least four-feet, we will need to deal with the impacts that will create on both sides; 3) with the floodwalls in place, will we want to rebuild the Sorlie Bridge structure wet or dry. Boppre responded that he thinks there is no question, especially on the East Grand Forks side, that we will build that bridge wet because we already have the flood protection in place. He added that a traffic plan will be needed even during the rehab.

Discussion on what issues need to be addressed for both a rehab or complete reconstruction of the bridges ensued, including the fact that an EIS will need to be done, etc..

Haugen reported that while the discussion was occurring on the Minnesota side, a meeting was also being held on the North Dakota side to talk about the need to raise more funds. He said that the Mayor of Grand Forks was talking before a group of people about the bridge inadequacies, and specifically that because of the bonding bill Minnesota may be in a better position to talk replacement while North Dakota is not in that same position. He added that part of that discussion was the need to start building a ground swell in order to take a run at the legislature to see if we can't infuse more transportation dollars in North Dakota.

Benning commented that one other thing that is happening on the North Dakota side, too, is that the federal pot of STP monies, where the NDDOT gets their urban and county funds, about \$60,000,000, is being eliminated and those monies are being dumped into the remaining six funding sources, so they won't have any state funds available, only federal, so they will have to start generating funds from their own general revenues to replace those monies.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Mid-Years

Benning reminded everyone that next month the DOTs will be holding their Mid-Year Review on Wednesday, May 7, 2008, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., with the Technical Advisory Committee following.

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2. Benning Changing Positions

Benning reported that in June there will most likely be a new NDDOT representative attending the Technical Advisory Committee meetings. He explained that when he came on board about ten years ago he was an urban and MPO engineer, and when he became an assistant he retained the MPO duties until the new urban engineer was able to take them over, and now, seven years later that is finally going to happen.

3. Regional Workshops

Haugen reported that recently there were eight regional workshops held, and on May 1st the results of those workshops will be brought into one room, one setting, and will sort of lay out a course to send a message to the legislative session in January. He said that if anyone is interested in attending they can sign up through Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute out of NDSU.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY ELLIS, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 9TH, 2008,
MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:36 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant