

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 11th, 2009 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-101**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the February 11th, 2009, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 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; Stacey Hanson, NDDOT-Bismarck (via conference call); Dale Bergman, Superintendent for Cities Area Transit; Brad Bail, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Ed Pavlish, NDDOT-Grand Forks; and Dean Rau, GF Assistant City Engineer.

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

A quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 14TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 14TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF STIMULUS PROJECT T.I.P. AMENDMENT

Haugen reported that he did include information in the packets, specifically a list of possible projects that may receive stimulus funds, however that list was put out the first part of February, and since then there has been some action taken at the Congressional level.

Haugen distributed copies of the latest information regarding the Stimulus Bill, and pointed out that there are some differences between the Senate and the House bills. He stated that those differences are mainly with the dollar amounts and the timelines. He said that it is hoped that this will all have been worked out by the end of the week.

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Haugen commented that, other than the dollar amounts, there are two other differences: 1) that the House requires that the 50% obligated funds need to be spent within 90 days, while the Senate allows for 180 days; and 2) in the Senate Bill the first 50% obligated funding would go to the States.

Haugen stated that one other difference that may affect projects is that the House Bill provides a 10% provision for enhancements, while the Senate Bill does not.

Haugen referred to the flow charts that were included in the information distributed, and explained that they show how the funds will be distributed. He pointed out that on the House side 10% comes out of the 45% sub-allocated funds. He added that there are some slight differences between the percents that are sub-allocated, with 45% in the House Bill and 40% in the Senate Bill.

Haugen referred to the last two pages and stated that they illustrate what the House Bill contains, broken down by State, with the first table listing funding breakdowns for Highways and Bridges; and the second table listing funding breakdowns for Transit Capital, which is further divided into Urban and Rural programs.

Haugen stated that the purpose of distributing this information is to let everyone know the differences that need to be reconciled by the Conference Committee. He added that we don't know yet if one or the other side might prevail, or even if a third set of criteria or information might be developed.

Pavlish pointed out that both distribution lists have notes at the bottom indicating that those States having no urbanized area over 200,000 in population would actually get to determine how they will split up their funding themselves. Haugen responded that there will still be the split, the 45% and the 40% would still need to be followed.

Haugen referred to the second page of the document, and pointed out that the House Bill includes a provision for MPOs to have their projects awarded within 75 days. He explained that that isn't for us, but is instead for those MPOs with a population of 200,000 or more.

Durrenberger asked if the differences on the flow charts; no DBE funding under the Senate Bill, and also only the first two blocks are the same on both charts; was something that will be worked out in committee. Haugen responded that it would. He commented that starting from the very first block, they will have to work out the funding amounts, and continue on to all the other differences as well.

Haugen reported that he has not been able to find anything that shows a similar transit flowchart, nor has he been able to find a Senate version of individual State breakdowns either.

Haugen referred to the MPO Study Area Map, and stated that everything in the study area, if it is going to get federal funds from the Stimulus Package, or even in our regular S.T.I.P. program

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needs to show up in this document, so hopefully everyone here has looked at this map when they developed their list of projects for Stimulus money. He added that they did look at every project and compared them to the Long Range Transportation Plan, but also did an Environmental Justice Analysis audit as well, so that map shows up in the document. He commented that, just by virtue most of these projects need to have a very minor environmental impact in order to qualify.

Haugen reported that the projects are broken down into North Dakota projects and Minnesota Projects, and both lists have gone through their respective City Councils, and have been approved and prioritized. He added that he did try to note in the tables whether or not a project is already in our current T.I.P. or S.T.I.P., and which year it is listed, so if there isn't a note in the remark section that project is not in either the T.I.P. or S.T.I.P.

Haugen commented that he did have to make some modifications to some of the projects. He then went over those modifications as follows:

- 1) Grand Forks Transit Project #3 – Traffic Signal Preemptive Improvement Project - Original dollar amount was \$180,000. Has been increased to \$360,000.
- 2) East Grand Forks Transit Project #4 – Fixed Route Replacement Vehicle – Programmed in 2012 as a Class 700, now looking at a Class 500 Low Floor Vehicle.
- 3) East Grand Forks Transit Project #5 – Purchase New and/or Relocate Bus Shelters – Originally programmed for \$120,000, with \$80,000 being programmed in 2010 and \$40,000 in 2011 – Now combining Projects 10 and 11, with \$40,000 being programmed in 2009 and \$40,000 in 2010, for a total of \$80,000.
- 4) East Grand Forks Transit Project #7 – Purchase 1 Replacement Class 500 Coach Low-Floor Vehicle – Clarification of description.

Haugen stated that these are the changes from what was included in the printed copies in the packets. He added that he is not aware of any changes that may have occurred on the North Dakota side, but he does know that on the transit side on the Minnesota side, and possibly on the street side as well, there have been some modifications already made at the State level.

Ehrenstrom reported that they had a teleconference with St. Paul to finalize their overall plans, with emphasis on stimulus projects, and the East Grand Forks projects were split up a little bit. He explained that what he did was to establish a new project for the fareboxes alone. Haugen pointed out that the farebox project is listed as Project #1. Ehrenstrom stated that Project #6, to purchase new demand response vehicles, is also on the MNDOT Stimulus project list, but because this project is funded using 5311 funds, mini-vans are not allowed, only Class 300/500 vehicles are allowable.

Ehrenstrom said that Project #7, the Low Floor 500 was set up on its own at a cost of \$190,000, using Section 5311 Program funds. Haugen commented that it is his understanding that they would not fund this project since it is already programmed in 2012, and to do so earlier would mean replacing the vehicle too early in its life. He added that Project #4 was also not funded, but

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that Project #7 may still be on the list, but at a cost of \$190,000 because of the removal of the fareboxes.

Nelson commented that under ITS they lumped together the security cameras with the hard-drives, and also the purchase of AVL and automatic stop devices. Haugen stated, then, that they combined Projects #2 and #3 into one project.

Ellis reported that they just heard that a Stimulus list came out today, and that none of the East Grand Forks street projects were funded. She stated that two T.E. projects were funded: 1) a new project to construct a multi-purpose trail on Hwy 220, which will require an amendment to the T.I.P.; and 2) a 2012 project to construct a sidewalk along Central Avenue. Haugen pointed out that these projects are listed in the tables as Projects #2 and #3.

Haugen commented that he received an e-mail that says that the list done today will mostly consist of Minnesota projects, not the local projects, so there is still an opportunity for local projects to get done, and another list will be announced soon.

Haugen stated that they will need to clarify whether or not the bridge project over the Red Lake River is still included. Ellis responded that she did hear that the bridge project was funded. Haugen said that another project that will need clarification is the rail project on Central Avenue, which was on MNDOTs list a while back.

Haugen said, again, that he is not aware of any changes on the Grand Forks street side.

Hanson reported that she has a couple of comments on street projects. She referred to Grand Forks Highway Project #4, various roadway segment seal projects on Cherry Street, and commented that the segment from 25th to 47th may be there in error as it is already listed as Highway Project #3. Rau agreed that that segment should not be included in Highway Project #4.

Hanson referred to the North Dakota transit projects, and stated that their transit personnel just released a comment stating that at this time it looks like the Stimulus funds would be for capital expenditures, and there are some projects that show operational expenditures, so we will have to wait and see what comes out in the final bill as to what types of projects will be eligible for the Transit Stimulus Funds.

Hanson commented that in regards to T.E. projects, it remains to be seen if there will be a provision for T.E. funding.

Rau referred to Project #1, install signal at 47th and Washington, and asked if it wasn't programmed for funding in 2010 already. Haugen responded that it actually isn't programmed at any specific location right now, it was identified in the solicitation for the next T.I.P., but the current T.I.P. does not show a specific location. Hanson commented that this project is shown in their S.T.I.P. as an intersection improvement project within the City of Grand Forks, with an

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intersection to be identified at a later date, and this is the project that the City essentially submitted for that funding, which they had marked down for 2011, so this is basically in their S.T.I.P. as an unidentified 2011 project that we are going to attempt to do with Stimulus monies.

Rau commented that in looking at the project scope they originally had done for the Cherry Street Project from 25th to 47th, they are now getting word that the FHWA will be enforcing the 10% replacement rule, and that project will be over that, so if we want to keep it on the list we will need to do a full, or modified PCR. He added that they will need to look at the rest of the project list as well to ensure that no other projects will need a full or modified PCR as well.

Williams asked, in regard to transit, when you talked about the fact that funding would be limited to capital improvements, would Project #3 still be okay. Hanson responded it would. Haugen pointed out that those projects with operational funding would be Projects #8, #9, and #11.

Williams asked if we have an approximate idea of how much transit monies we may be getting. Haugen responded that we don't. He added that there is a map that shows the traffic signals in relation to bus routes. He went over the map briefly, explaining which intersections are already included on the list.

Haugen reported that we did advertise a public hearing for today's meeting. He added that we also allowed until noon for written comments, and none were received, therefore he would now like to open the public hearing.

There was no one present for discussion.

Haugen closed the public hearing.

MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY WILLIAMS, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT T.I.P. AMENDMENT TO THE 2009-2012 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO CHANGES AS NOTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Haugen stated that outside of the Stimulus Package we have some additional amendments to our 2009-2012 T.I.P. that need to be addressed as well. He explained that the amendments are to the 2009 project list, and are included in the packets.

Haugen referred to the new project list, pointing out that the changes are highlighted in yellow, and went over them briefly as follows:

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- 1) Grand Forks Project #3 – Haugen explained that transit received some 5309 monies that were earmarked for rural properties, but which have since been transferred over to the Grand Forks and Fargo Urban Programs. He stated that Grand Forks received \$384,000, and has decided to use those monies to purchase a fare box system, an automated stop announcement, and a vehicle locator (AVL) system in 2009.
- 2) Grand Forks Project #6 – Haugen stated that on the street side the Skyway Bridge project is being amended to include some repainting costs in the scope of work. He said that this added about \$2,000,000 to the project cost.
- 3) Grand Forks Project #12 – Haugen reported that the funding amount has not changed, but there has been a modification to the project scope. He explained instead of a slurry seal taking place, micro-surfacing will be done instead to US 2 from Gateway Drive to the Sorlie Bridge.
- 4) Grand Forks Project #14 – Haugen commented that this is not something we see too often, but it is required to be shown in the T.I.P., and that is that the City of Grand Forks is using Community Development Block Grant Funds to upgrade some sidewalks and curb ramps in the Near North Neighborhood, and so we need to show those federal funds being used on those improvements.
- 5) East Grand Forks Project #9 – Haugen stated that we are amending the project list to include a project that is not currently programmed, and which is identified as Project #9. He explained that the project utilizes the remaining high priority program funds from the 13th Street S.E. project to cul-de-sac two roadways that are being replaced by the 13th Street S.E. connection to Bygland Road.

Haugen reported that a public hearing was advertised to occur at this meeting, and that, again, it was stated that comments could be submitted until noon, and no comments were received.

Haugen opened the public hearing.

There was no one present for comments.

Haugen closed the public hearing.

MOVED BY BAIL, SECONDED BY HANSON, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE FY 2009-2012 T.I.P. AMENDMENTS AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF DOWNTOWN PLAN TRAFFIC FORECASTS

Haugen reported that this basically deals with a couple of possible parking issues in our downtown area. He explained that we are asking our traffic model to identify what impact, if any, we might need to be concerned about with a shift of about 150 Central High School students from the current Civic parking lot to the top two floors of the Central Parking Ramp. He pointed

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out that there are only two entrances to the Central Parking Ramp, and they are on 4th and 5th Streets, which is a fairly busy area, so we are asking the traffic model to identify what impact the increased traffic might have on the traffic operations in the downtown area.

Haugen stated that the second issue involves the possible closing of the 1st Avenue North connection between DeMers and 6th Street. He explained that some of the development ideas, or concepts, that have been put forth for the redevelopment of the old civic auditorium site have shown the possible vacation of 1st Avenue North, which could also impact traffic flow in the downtown, so we have asked that the traffic model identify what that impact might be.

Haugen reported that there are copies of some very colorful diagrams included in the packet that illustrate what the model changes are. He explained that A.T.A.C. printed out our traffic model network, and the centroid connectors, as well as the traffic volumes that are generated on those links and connectors.

Haugen referred to the Proposed Changes Page 2 diagram, and pointed out that the centroid connectors shown in red are connectors that they are removing. He explained that these are connectors that were used to account for traffic being generated between the school and the parking lot, and now, because of the parking being moved from the parking lot to the parking ramp, they are no longer necessary. He then pointed out that the green connectors illustrate the traffic that is being moved from the parking lot to the parking ramp.

Haugen said that you will also notice that, South of DeMers, or on either side of DeMers, we are assigning some new centroid connectors. He explained that as part of this traffic impact we noticed that the 2035 Traffic Model was assigning a lot of cars off of DeMers Avenue onto the ring-road concepts, so we asked A.T.A.C. to update the links for DeMers Avenue on the model because, in reality, most vehicles stay on DeMers Avenue, and that should be reflected in the model.

Haugen referred to the last page of diagrams, and stated that it shows that we are eliminating the link on 1st Avenue North. He stated that we will have a model run both with, and without that link so we can be more informed on what may happen if the civic auditorium site is redeveloped.

Haugen stated that he hopes to have all this information tomorrow, and a final draft document by the end of the week for the Downtown Plan. He added that they are trying to schedule a Steering Committee meeting for later this month, which will include a public input meeting, or public presentation of the draft document. He commented that they hope to go through the formal amendment process to get the plan updated in each City's Comprehensive Plan so that by the end of April we will have a final, updated Downtown Plan document.

Information only.

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MATTER OF SPRING FLOOD FORECAST – BRIDGE CLOSURE PLAN

Haugen reminded everyone that a couple of years ago we did the Bridge Closure/Traffic Management Incident Plan for the two cities, and as part of that document we agreed that each spring we would inform the Technical Advisory Committee of the projected flood forecast for that spring is so that if there are any activities that need to be started in preparation of implementing the Bridge Closure Plan, they can be started as soon as possible.

Haugen stated that one thing we were asked was to distribute the contact list each spring to ensure that the contact numbers are up-to-date for each of the agencies involved. He said, then, that he would ask that everyone review the list and let him know if any changes need to be made.

Haugen commented that the latest outlooks for flooding this spring indicate a fairly good possibility we could have a major flood, which could mean that two of the three bridges may need to be closed. He stated that the outlook should be updated soon, so, if the committee wishes, he can include the updated information in the March meeting packets. He added that this will give us the ability to implement the bridge closure plan to help traffic conditions through out metro area move as smoothly as possible.

Information only.

MATTER OF ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS

Haugen stated that he talked about the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects at last month's meeting, however he included the wrong list in the packets. He said that it should have been the 2008 list instead of the 2009 list, so he will get that information out right away.

Haugen reported that the list will show all of the projects that were programmed to occur in 2008, and what the obligated dollar amount for each project was versus what was actually programmed. He explained that the intent of this is to give some idea back to the public, and others, of what was actually obligated versus what we guessed would be obligated, and this needs to be done within three months of the end of the calendar year. He added that this information is included as an appendices in the T.I.P. document in July or August.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. 2008 Final Report

Hanson reported that they are waiting for the 2008 Final Report from the MPO. Haugen responded that copies of the 2008 Final Report were mailed yesterday. He explained that the intent was to hand deliver them at today's meeting, but once we were informed that the DOT was not going to be able to attend, the copies were placed in the mail.

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2. Approved Urban Program For Draft S.T.I.P.

Hanson stated that Bismarck will be putting out their approved Urban Program, and from that they will need to develop a Draft T.I.P., and projects, to be placed in their Draft S.T.I.P. that will be going out in April. She stated, then, that this will need to be addressed in March. She added that all the cities submitted their project priorities, and they are currently working on getting the Urban Program approved, and then they will move forward with putting in projects for the Draft S.T.I.P. Haugen asked if this will be available for the March Technical Advisory Committee meeting. Hanson responded that that is her hope. She added that their Planning and Programming Division really wants to get the Draft S.T.I.P. out in April, so with that we need to move forward on the urban side as well, so it would probably be a good item to put on the March Technical Advisory Committee Agenda. Haugen agreed, adding that he would like to have a copy of the project list to include in the packets in order to allow for everyone to have time to review them. He stated that we also need to remember that when we have a public hearing we need to advertise for that public hearing ten days in advance, so it would be good to get the list in March to ensure that it is completed for the April public hearing.

Information only.

3. MNDOT Draft State Plan Presentation

Haugen reported that on February 19th, MNDOT in Bemidji will be presenting a draft of their State Plan. He stated that it starts at 10:00, at the district office in Bemidji, and can be reviewed on their website as well. He added that the ATP will be meeting in the afternoon as well to finalize their T.I.P..

Information only.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 11TH, 2009 MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:25 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant