

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the March 11<sup>th</sup>, 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; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Les Noehre, 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 FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON STIMULUS FUNDING**

Haugen reported that copies of the notices from Federal Highway, along with their accompanying tables; and from Federal Transit, along with their accompanying tables alerting us that the clock has started for the obligation of stimulus funds. He stated that some federal highway funds have 120 days to be obligated, while some transit funds have 180 days to be obligated.

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Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that a copy of an e-mail that was circulated within the State of Minnesota discussing their original list of projects, and specifically that it had a lack of projects identified for cities with populations between 5,000 and 200,000. He said that a re-examination, or re-visit of this list to try to include more projects for those types of communities was done, with up to \$20,000,000 in funding being identified for those projects selected. He commented, however, that he received an e-mail, which may have actually been sent during yesterday's storm, that listed those projects selected for the \$20,000,000, and, unfortunately there are none in our MPO area, but Minnesota did revisit their original list of projects because they were lacking in a specific population area.

Haugen reported that on the North Dakota side, a copy of the final sub-allocation list of how the funds were split out between the 13 cities, those cities with a population between 5,000 and 200,000, was distributed and included in the packets. He referred to the list and pointed out that Grand Forks did receive just under \$3.5 million dollars in funding.

Haugen distributed copies of an announcement from North Dakota on how they will be addressing the Enhancement Program. He commented that, as you will recall, when we adopted our North Dakota Stimulus Package, we included four or five projects to complete for enhancement monies. He said that at that time he was unsure if North Dakota had done a state-wide solicitation of projects, but since final passage of the bill, and the receipt of all additional information concerning the package, North Dakota will be allowing a statewide solicitation to occur on enhancements. He stated that the new deadline is now March 27<sup>th</sup>, and, if you have already submitted enhancement projects you will not need to re-submit them, but if you are going to make modifications to those project you can do so, or if you want remove one and insert a different one, that is allowable as well. He said that he also believes that the projects submitted back in November are also allowed to be considered.

Haugen stated that, again, if you submitted a project back in November, you do not have to submit that project again, but, as he understands it, North Dakota got just over \$5,000,000 for enhancement projects, which will be split 50/50, 50% to the state and the other 50% to the county and urban programs. He asked if it was correct that these funds do not have a 120-day half-obligation requirement on them. Hanson responded that that is the way she understands it.

Haugen reported that the enhancement projects will be selected by the Director's Task Force, which is the same way our regular enhancement projects are selected, with members of the task force meeting annually to select enhancement projects. He added that the State of Minnesota has kept their enhancement projects in-house.

Hanson commented that FM/COG is having to do another T.I.P. amendment for stimulus projects because some of their urban projects were changing in either scope or cost, to the point where an amendment is necessary, so she would just caution that if Grand Forks is seeing any scopes or costs change that would cause another amendment to be needed that they let NDDOT know that as soon as possible in order to ensure the projects can still be done within the 120-day deadline.

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Haugen reported that MNDOT is still considering how they are going to divvy up their transit dollars. Ehrenstrom commented that the projects have been ranked and prioritized, and a list will be sent out on March 23<sup>rd</sup> on the MNDOT website. Haugen stated that once that list is received, the MPO will have to enact an amendment to its T.I.P. to account for those projects. He commented that they had identified the project changes, but the MPO Executive Policy Board did not formally amend the T.I.P. for transit, per a request from MNDOT, so we still have to do that step, but that is all that is left to do on the Minnesota side. He added that on the North Dakota side we would probably only need to do amendments should the scope of work or the cost of the projects were to change, or if a new enhancement project were to come up that would require an amendment.

Information only.

**MATTER OF 2008 OBLIGATED PROJECT LIST**

Haugen stated that he had hoped to get approval of our annual listing of obligated projects, which is a requirement of MPOs under SAFETEA-LU. He explained that we take our T.I.P., the annual element of our T.I.P., which is the first year of the T.I.P. program, and estimate what we think the cost and federal share will be for each program, and then the following year we revisit the T.I.P. and show what was actually obligated for each project.

Haugen said that he did e-mail the list to everyone for confirmation on the actual obligation amounts for each project, but only received one reply, and that was from the North Dakota District Office, however they only gave a grand total for all projects, not the amount for each project as was requested. He asked that everyone please go back to their offices and take another look at these projects that were programmed to occur in 2008 and let him know what was actually obligated, what the federal share was, and what the other funding sources and amounts were for each project.

Haugen commented that this March meeting would have been the ideal time for this body to make a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board that they approve the 2008 Obligated Project List, so if he were to get this information prior to the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board, he may still be able to get them to approve it. He added that in July and August this information will be included as an appendices to the T.I.P. document.

Information only.

**MATTER OF SCHOOL SAFETY STUDY SCOPE OF WORK**

Haugen reported that for the past several years the MPO, in conjunction with the School District, the City of Grand Forks, and the Safe Kids Organization have retained the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center out of NDSU to review several of our elementary schools for safety concerns. He stated that they intend to do it again this year as well, and for the first time will be looking at

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a school in East Grand Forks, New Heights. He added that the Grand Forks schools to be looked at are Lewis and Clark and West.

Haugen pointed out that a copy of the Scope of Work for this study was included in the packets for your review.

Noehre asked if any items from the last study had been implemented. Haugen responded that some of the Safe Route to School grants have come about from these past studies, and also the School District has done some improvements based on the recommendations from these studies. He added that the studies typically included both short-term and long-term solutions to various safety issues, which gives the School District the ability to make some short-term fixes to some of their safety concerns as well as to plan for more long-term fixes as well.

Williams pointed out that Lake Agassiz incorporated many of the recommended solutions in their study when they redesigned their school recently. Haugen added that Century Elementary was one of the first schools studied, and they did quite a bit of the recommended solutions from their study, as did Kelly Elementary, and Ben Franklin is looking at implementing many of the recommendations from their study as well.

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY WILLIAMS, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE SCHOOL SAFETY STUDY AND TO AMEND THE MPO'S CONTRACT WITH A.T.A.C. TO COMPLETE THE STUDY.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF RFP FOR AERIAL PHOTOS**

Nelson reported that when they did the solicitation for work program items both East Grand Forks and Grand Forks indicated that they wanted an update to our Aerial Photography. She pointed out that a copy of the RFP was included in the packet, and explained that there will be a quick turnaround on this item as the optimal timeframe for taking the photos is coming up very soon. She added that they hope to get adequate proposals to choose from even with the short turnaround.

Boppre asked how many proposals were submitted last time we did this. Nelson responded that there were four proposals submitted. Boppre asked when the photos would be taken, and when would they be submitted to each of the Cities. Nelson responded that they are hoping for a flight time between March 15<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Durrenberger asked how the current flight area compares with the previous flight area. Nelson referred to a copy of a map illustrating the flight area and pointed out that the fly area is roughly the same last time, with the exception of a small portion to the south not being included because

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it is beyond 62<sup>nd</sup>, and they don't see a lot of growth occurring in that area in the near future; and a small portion to the north being included because of the new landfill possibilities.

Noehre asked if this information would only be available through the City's server. Nelson responded that the past photos were available on the City's server, but they have received a grant through the State of North Dakota, and one of their requests was to have it on their hub as well, so this update will be on the State hub.

Boppre commented that these photos are so nice, and they use them every day in their business for the City.

Rau referred to the Staff Report, and pointed out that it states that the MPO budget is \$35,000, with an additional \$5,000 from the State of North Dakota; but on Page 57 it states that the project shall not exceed \$50,000, and he was wondering where the additional \$10,000 will come from if we go over \$40,000. Haugen responded that one of those numbers is an error. He said that staff would determine which number was incorrect, and make that correction in the document.

***MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO APPROVE THE AERIAL IMAGERY PROJECT RFP SUBJECT TO CORRECTION OF THE FUNDING AMOUNT.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF DRAFT FREIGHT STUDY**

Nelson reported that Ali Rood, MPO Intern, actually did most of the work on the Freight Study, however Ms. Rood has since left the MPO, so she has assumed the duty of completing the approval process of the document.

Nelson stated that she is seeking preliminary approval of the Draft Freight Study document, after which a public meeting will be held for final comments and recommendations. She said that any changes will then be incorporated and the Final Freight Study document will again be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee for approval.

Haugen explained that this study was done per a request from the State of North Dakota Department of Transportation in order to comply with SAFETEA-LU requirements. He stated that it is hoped to have the final document approved by May of this year. He asked if Ms. Hanson had had an opportunity to look it over to determine whether or not it fulfills their request. Hanson responded that at this time she would say that it does fulfill their request, however she did forward a copy to their Planning and Programming Department, but has not received any comments to date, so it looks pretty good.

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Boppre asked if there were any major changes to the document since it was presented last. Nelson responded that there actually haven't been any changes made since it was last presented.

Noehre commented that it appears that Page 115 is from the Street and Highway Plan, that there aren't any budget recommendations from the Freight Study. Nelson responded that most of the recommendations were provided through private industries, and even the first public meeting indicated that most of the requests could be answered with our Long Range Transportation Plan. Haugen added that no recommendations were added to the plan, and the comments made were listed simply as their comments to us. Noehre stated that the reason he mentioned this was because there were suggestions about an underpass on Gateway, and the realignment of Gateway and Washington, etc., and they are both impossibilities. Haugen responded that the intent of the study was simply to gather information. Noehre said that he just wanted to ensure that they weren't in there as recommendations.

Boppre referred to Page 115, and pointed out that T.I.P. 2 should read 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. not N.E.. Durrenberger pointed out that under the Illustrative Projects list it states that we need to continue to evaluate the long-term need for a North Bypass/Truck Relief Route, while on Page 114 it states that a North Bypass/Truck Relief Route will be constructed, so the statement on Page 114 should be changed to reflect what is stated on Page 115.

***MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY BOPPRE, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD TO GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT FREIGHT STUDY SUBJECT TO INCLUSION OF CHANGES AS NOTED ABOVE.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Haugen reported that the next public meeting will be held either the last two days of March or the first two days of April. He added that staff hopes to receive final approval from both the Technical Advisory Committee and the MPO Executive Policy Board at their April meetings.

Haugen commented that next Wednesday, in Fargo, Minnesota will be holding a Freight Forum. He explained that Minnesota is doing a couple of freight studies.

**MATTER OF DRAFT DOWNTOWN PLAN**

Haugen reported that last month we talked about some traffic forecast modeling revisions that were going to be done. He stated that the memorandums highlighting the results of those revisions were included in the packets.

Haugen pointed out that the three primary things being done to the forecast are shown on Pages 130, 131, and 132. He explained that they are doing some Synthroid Connector changes, are updating DeMers Avenue capacity constraint data; and are looking at an assignment without 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue being a connecting street to DeMers Avenue.

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Haugen commented that one of the issues they had was that they showed traffic being assigned off of DeMers Avenue, primarily on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, in our previous forecast model, while in reality most of the traffic stays on DeMers Avenue as it goes through and connects the two downtowns, so with the revisions they made, particularly to the capacity constraints on DeMers Avenue, they updated the information based on the new timing Synchro information, and are now assigning, more consistently, traffic staying on DeMers Avenue rather than veering off DeMers Avenue and then merging back to get across the Sorlie Bridge. He added that the main Synthroid Connector shift was the student parking for Central High School moving from the Civic Auditorium parking lot to the two upper stories of the parking ramp, so they modified the Synthroid Connectors to show that change.

Haugen referred to Pages 121 and 122, and stated that they basically sum up the fact that there is a lot of traffic on DeMers Avenue now and there will continue to be a lot of traffic on DeMers Avenue in the future. He added, however, that the improved timing plans they installed two years ago has resulted in a lot of improvement in the traffic flow, and they are also seeing that with the 2012 project to update the traffic signals they will also be able to see improved traffic flow into the future.

Haugen commented that they did note that we are getting close to a 100% capacity volume on the Sorlie, and that we have some bridges, particularly the Kennedy Bridge to the north, that are not seeing enough assignment, so in the future when we update our traffic model we will have to pay close attention to how we assign traffic going across the bridges.

Haugen stated that they also concluded that, essentially, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is not that major of a concern as to whether or not it remains open, so the concepts you saw for the Civic Auditorium redevelopment could probably proceed with or without 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue being carried through.

Haugen reported that they are proceeding with preliminary approval at the Planning Commission and the City Council levels with the plan document. He stated that the Technical Steering Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 Noon in Conference Room A101. He added that there will also be a public open house that same evening from 6:30 to 8:30 at the River Walk Center, and a Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 a.m. in the Grand Forks Council Chambers. He said that they will then be seeking final approval of both Planning Commissions and City Councils in April.

Information only.

**MATTER OF 2010-2013 T.I.P. PROJECT LISTING**

Haugen reported that this is an attempt to have a pre-draft of the preliminary 2010-2013 T.I.P., however he isn't sure that everyone has had time to work on the actual T.I.P. projects due to the Stimulus.

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Ellis asked if there were copies of the 2010 East Grand Forks Project List. Haugen responded that he must have printed the 2009 East Grand Forks Project List by mistake. He stated, however, that he would guess it would look like the 2009 list on Page 152, but with lower numbers, although we would also need to add 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. to the project list as well.

Boppre commented that it sounds like there will be some discussion on what to do with our sub-target monies at the next work session in two weeks.

Haugen stated that the next T.I.P. will show the 2010 to 2013 projects, so he tried to show what the current approved T.I.P. had for the approved 2010 to 2012 years to see if there were any changes that we may need to start working on that we aren't already aware of, or if any of these projects have difference scope of works than previously, or if any of the project costs or funding sources have changed. He said that the reason for doing this is so that if a public hearing is required we can get it published 10-days prior to the April 8<sup>th</sup>, Meeting.

Durrenberger referred to Page 162, and pointed out that the projects listed are for 2010 and 2012. Haugen responded that the reason for this is because these project were added to the T.I.P. at the end of the T.I.P. Process, so he inserted them where there were empty spaces. He added that last year we had a lot of differences between our Final T.I.P. Draft and the Final Draft S.T.I.P., so these projects were placed wherever there was an empty line, but now that he has a little more time he will try to get them listed in the correct sequence.

Haugen asked that everyone please look these project over and get back to him with any changes they may have. He referred to Page 158, Project #19, and stated that there will be some changes necessary to that project, particularly the total funding amount, and how much federal funding there will be.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Federal Fiscal Year 2009 Finalized

Haugen reported that Federal Fiscal Year 2009 was finalized late last night, and the President is expected to sign it today, if he hasn't already. He said that this is for the annual appropriations for programs, adding that Transportation saw an 8% increase from last year's funding level.

2. Possible 2<sup>nd</sup> Or 3<sup>rd</sup> Stimulus Package

Haugen stated that there has been some discussion of a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Stimulus Package. He explained that the job loss report has made some want to try to create more jobs. He added that there is also a need for some of the financial institutions to receive more infusion of our federal funds, so there may be a possibility that some of the projects not able to be funded with this package could be funded with the next.

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3. New MNDOT Member

Haugen referred to the agenda, and pointed out that there is a new member listed for MNDOT, Joe McKinnon. He explained that Graig Gilbertson has accepted a different position with MNDOT, and Mr. McKinnon is his replacement as the Planning Engineer for District 2. He stated that Mr. McKinnon did call him this morning to let him know that he still had some right-of-way projects he needed to finalize before he would be able to take on his new responsibilities, therefore he wasn't able to be here today.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO ADJOURN THE  
MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:25  
P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant