

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Wednesday, June 17th, 2009 – 12:00 Noon
Grand Forks County Commissioners Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

Gary Malm, Chairman, called the June 17th, 2009, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:04 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Gary Malm, Art Bakken, Punky Beauchamp, Warren Strandell, Dick Grassel, Greg Leigh, and Doug Christensen.

Absent were: Steve Adams.

Guest(s) present were: Jane Williams, GF Traffic Engineer and Dean Rau, Assistant GF City Engineer.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Teri Kouba, GF/EGF MPO Planner; Nancy Ellis, GF/EGF Planner, Senior; Daniel Ollhoff, GF/EGF MPO Intern; Kristen Benidt, GF/EGF MPO Intern; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Malm declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 20TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY BAKKEN, TO APPROVE THE MAY 20TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Beauchamp, Grassel, Bakken, Leigh, Strandell, and Malm.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF 2009 T.I.P. AMENDMENTS

Haugen reported that included in the materials you received in your packets was a copy of an e-mail he received from the NDDOT requesting that we amend our 2009-2012 T.I.P. to include a project on DeMers Avenue. He explained that the project would essentially consist of pavement repairs and rehabilitation from Washington Street to 5th Street, with the exception of the DeMers Overpass, which is actually currently being worked on.

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Haugen stated that the cost of the project is \$2,000,000, with \$1,600,000 being covered by federal funding. He commented that even though this project is not scheduled to be done until 2010, the NDDOT asked for it to be amended into the 2009 year in order for them to be able to get some federal reimbursement on the preliminary engineering costs that will occur in 2009.

Haugen reported that a public hearing was advertised for, and held at the June 10th Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, with no oral or verbal comments received, therefore, both staff and the Technical Advisory Committee are recommending approval.

MOVED BY BAKKEN, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE AMENDING THE FY 2009-2012 T.I.P. TO INCLUDE THE DEMERS AVENUE PAVEMENT REPAIR PROJECT IN FY 2009.

Voting Aye: Beauchamp, Grassel, Bakken, Leigh, Strandell, and Malm.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS RATING UPDATE

Kouba reported that this item was tabled at the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting, and a request was made for additional information. She stated that she did provide additional information in the packets that gives a better overview on what a pavement management system is, and what data it can provide us.

Kouba commented that, if approved, from the imagery we already have, and from other sources available, the consultants will bring everything together and update the software we already have, and then train staff on how to use that software. She stated that we are just trying to provide a tool for both cities to be able to do their jobs more effectively, give both City Councils budget options that will provide them with the best bang for their buck when considering maintenance of their roadways.

Grassel stated that after talking to the East Grand Forks Engineer, he was informed that Polk County already uses this, and apparently really like it. Kouba agreed, adding that it really does help them prioritize what needs to be done first, as well as what will give them the most for their money.

Williams explained that the City of Grand Forks, because of considerable staff changes, does not currently have anyone on staff that has been trained on the software, so they are really looking forward to receiving training. She stated that they did check with the manufacturer of the software and were told that it could be used on more than one computer at a time, and placed on many computers so as many staff members that can be trained will be trained and all the engineers will have access to it and will be able to use for a variety of things.

Bakken asked if the latest updates have been installed as well. Kouba responded that the update has not been completed, but is in the process of being done. She added that the updates are actually part of the proposal, so the consultants would be adding the updates and providing training.

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Bakken asked what the real question was on this. Grassel responded that Mr. Christensen and himself were questioning why we were planning on spending \$70,000 for someone to come in and tell us which roadways need to be repaired when we can typically see that for ourselves, but since that time he has been made aware of what this program can actually provide.

Christensen reported present.

Malm asked that an explanation be given as to why the City of Grand Forks would like to see this approved. Christensen stated that he can read about that. Bakken commented that basically the issue is that staff isn't trained on the current software, and updates need to be made to the program in any event. Christensen asked, then, if that means that it will cost \$70,000 to learn how to use it. Kouba responded that the cost includes updating our data base as well. She explained that that is basically what the consultants will be doing, updating our data bases, which takes a considerable amount of time, which would pull our engineers away from projects that are necessary for them to do for the City.

Christensen stated that what he is real curious about is how this will tell us how deep our concrete is. Kouba responded that we already know how deep our concrete is as that is part of the information already in our data base, but because of the way the cameras are set, they are stereo-focused, they can measure the depth of cracks with the computer from the imagery that we already had done last October. Christensen asked how that works, are these x-ray cameras, is that how they can determine how deep the concrete is. Kouba responded, again, that the depth of the concrete was entered when it was poured, and is part of the software. She stated that the software is really a tool for budgeting purposes, for figuring out what the best options are for the least amount of money.

Christensen asked who updates the software so that we have accurate data in the computer to do the estimating. Kouba responded that the new information will be updated by the consultants, after which the engineers can then keep the program updated. Christensen stated, then, that to be able to figure out what it will cost to build roads around here we will need to get that information from companies like Strata, Porta-mix, or whoever, and now we are getting ourselves into something else. Kouba agreed, adding that that is something that the engineers will do, get that information and bring it in to the budgeting process.

MOVED BY BEAUCHAMP, SECONDED BY BAKKEN, TO APPROVE ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH GOODPOINTE TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE PAVEMENT RATING AND SOFTWARE UPDATES AND SOFTWARE TRAINING.

Voting Aye: Beauchamp, Grassel, Bakken, Leigh, Strandell, and Malm.

Voting Nay: Christensen.

MATTER OF TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION STUDY

Haugen reported that back in April this body approved an RFP to hire a consultant to assist the City of Grand Forks and NDDOT on creating signal timing plans so that the arterial roadways in

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Grand Forks have better coordinated traffic signals. He explained that the reason East Grand Forks is not included is because they have less traffic signals, their traffic signals are spaced differently, and MNDOT controls the signals on their timing plans, so this is for the Grand Forks area.

Haugen stated that the RFP was sent out, and three responses were received. He said that the Selection Committee reviewed all three proposals, and are recommending we hire Alliant Engineering to perform the study.

Haugen explained that Alliant Engineering is the firm that did the 32nd Avenue Signal Coordination Plan last summer, which has been successful, so they are familiar with what we desire as a community, and how our operations and systems work. He stated, therefore, that the recommended action is to approve executing a contract with Alliant Engineering, not to exceed \$145,000, to perform the Traffic Signal Coordination Plan.

Haugen referred to the timeline for the project, included in the packets, and pointed out that Columbia Road will be the first corridor that we will focus on, for which timing plans should be implemented by this fall; and then next year the remaining corridors will be focused on as well. He stated that as part of this study the City of Grand Forks is upgrading almost three dozen traffic signals in order for these signal plans to work. He said that part of the signal upgrade costs will be paid for using stimulus funds from the Department of Energy because this will help conserve energy by saving fuel, so it is part of a larger project.

MOVED BY BAKKEN, SECONDED BY LEIGH, TO APPROVE THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH ALLIANT ENGINEERING, NOT TO EXCEED \$145,000, TO DO THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION PLAN.

***Voting Aye: Beauchamp, Grassel, Bakken, Leigh, Strandell, Malm, and Christensen.
Voting Nay: None.***

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Update On Various Railroad Crossing Items

Haugen distributed copies of an e-mail he sent out earlier from Jane Williams, Pete Haga, and himself to the Grand Forks Service Safety Committee regarding various railroad crossing items. He explained that the memo indicates that we have been working with the State of North Dakota and BNSF, particularly on the State Mill Spur, to upgrade the crossing for improved safety, which will allow us to perchance create a quiet zone status.

Haugen reported that last fall the NDDOT did metro-wide traffic counts, with the results indicating that many of our crossings show a double-digit decrease in traffic volume. He stated that with the decrease in traffic volume, it has made it possible, perhaps, that we could do quiet

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zones in some areas of the community with the existing equipment we have, therefore we wouldn't necessary need to do an upgrade, or at least we may only have to put in a median on once side of the crossing, which is much more minimal than first thought.

Haugen referred to the document he distributed, specifically the third paragraph on the first page of the document, and pointed out that it talks about the fact that we did schedule to the railroad crossing study in our 2009/2010 MPO Work Plan. He said that he is asking today for approval from this body to be able to work with NDDOT to identify some funding sources that we can use to jumpstart this study in 2009, and then carry it into 2010 for finalization, so with the information received regarding the traffic volumes being lower, we might be able to get to quiet zone status quickly, so he is asking for the okay from this body to be able to work with the DOT in order to get this process started as soon as possible.

Consensus was that Mr. Haugen work with the DOT to get the process of updating various railroad crossings started as soon as possible.

Grassel asked if work was going to be done on the Central Avenue crossing this summer. Haugen responded it was. Grassel asked, then, if they were planning on narrowing up that road. Haugen responded that the project development is still being discussed, but the ideal option would be to narrow the northside of that roadway in order that it be more focused on where the crossing is, and how people approach it. Grassel asked if they would be putting crossing arms in there. Haugen responded they would.

Grassel stated, then, that the only other crossing left to deal with would be the one by Sacred Heart School. Haugen responded that that is correct, and, as he explained in the e-mail, on the Minnesota side, their view of the stimulus (ARRA) funds is that they may have under-represented railroad crossing projects when they funded stimulus (ARRA) monies, so now they are going back and asking for people to accelerate railroad crossings in their regular federal program so that one remaining crossing has already been identified for acceleration, but that would be the one crossing in the downtown area left that wouldn't meet the minimum eligibility for quiet zone status so we are pushing to get it done as soon as possible as well.

Grassel asked if he was correct that the railroad was also asking that some of the crossing east of Highway 2 be removed. Haugen responded that he is not part of that so he can't answer that. Ellis commented that her and Scott Huizenga are currently working on that at this time.

2. July 15th MPO Executive Policy Board Meeting Agenda Items

Haugen reported that the railroad crossing items update will be one of the items on the July agenda, as will several more T.I.P. amendments due to additional monies being made available because of stimulus funding. He stated that one other item will be an update on the Merrifield Bridge/Interchange project, per this body's request that quarterly reports be given on the progress of that project.

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3. Congressman Oberstar Announcement

Haugen commented that Congressman Oberstar will be releasing his re-authorization of the transportation program tomorrow. He explained that Congressman Oberstar has been promising major reform of the way it is delivered, and has also promised major increases in the budget. He said that there is one huge problem, and that is how to fund those promised increases, but we will find out more about this tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY BEAUCHAMP, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 17TH, 2009, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:21 P.M.

Voting Aye: Beauchamp, Grassel, Bakken, Leigh, Strandell, Malm, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant