

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

**Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009 – 12:00 Noon
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A101**

CALL TO ORDER

Gary Malm, Chairman, called the April 22nd, 2009, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:02 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

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

Those members who were absent were: Art Bakken.

Guests present were: Jane Williams, GF Traffic Engineer.

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Malm declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 18TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY BEAUCHAMP, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 18TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF MODIFICATION TO THE TRANSIT STIMULUS PROJECTS

Haugen reported that this modification only affects Grand Forks projects. He explained that Grand Forks is requesting a modification to their stimulus T.I.P. project list to show the purchase of three replacement transit vehicles; two of them being diesel, and one a hybrid. He stated that the MPO needs to ratify that request.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

Grassel commented that he noticed that the cost of the hybrid is about \$200,000 more than the diesels, and he was wondering if they just want to try a hybrid or is there some other reason for purchasing it. Haugen responded that a life cycle cost analyses was performed and the results indicate that there would be a savings over the lifetime use of the vehicle, so they would make up the cost difference. He added that they are also trying to be more “green” as well.

Beauchamp asked if the hybrid would be a diesel with a generator on it. Haugen responded it would be a basic diesel with the alternative hybrid sources as well.

MOVED BY BEAUCHAMP, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO APPROVE MODIFICATION OF THE NORTH DAKOTA PROJECTS FUNDED BY ARRA TO INCLUDE THE PURCHASE OF THREE TRANSIT VEHICLES.

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF ARRA 1511 CERTIFICATION

Haugen reported that this certification is required in order for stimulus monies to be awarded to Grand Forks projects. He stated that it is for the transit side of the ARRA funds, and is something that the State of North Dakota has determined the MPO needs to sign before funds can be awarded, therefore, staff is recommending approval authorizing the Chairman to sign the certification.

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE ARRA 1511 CERTIFICATION.

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE

Haugen reported that the Downtown Plan was approved by the Grand Forks City Council at their Monday meeting, and by the East Grand Forks City Council at their Tuesday meeting. He added that it was also approved by both Planning Commissions as well, therefore, staff is recommending approval by the Executive Policy Board.

Grassel commented that in the presentation given at the City Council meeting last night you indicated that there could possibly be a building built in the Cabela’s parking lot, and, of course, we are currently in discussions with the downtown merchants about parking issues. He stated that they currently don’t feel there is enough parking, so he would think that if there were to be any opposition to the Downtown Plan it would be the possibility of a building being built in that parking lot.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

Haugen responded that this would be a long-term project. He added that they also identify, long-term, that as some of the surface parking lots are built upon we would need to look at the possibility of constructing vertical parking, or parking ramps. He explained that their findings indicate that coming off the bridge, a surface parking lot seems to be a low intensity use of the land, and in the future as the downtown develops, that will most likely become one of the prime locations for the construction of a building for more intensive uses, and the parking lot being replaced with vertical parking, or parking ramps.

Grassel stated that, while he isn't sure how much the parking ramps are being used in Grand Forks, and when you look at the cost of building and maintaining them, he doesn't foresee them being built anytime soon in East Grand Forks.

Beauchamp commented that when he first saw those drawings they bothered him as well, but at the same time we have to remember that Cabelas owns that property, and has control over it, and he doesn't see them giving that control up anytime soon, but if it should happen in the future, then at least there is a plan for what could be done with the property, it is just an idea.

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO APPROVE THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE RIVER FORKS DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE.

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

MATTER OF AERIAL PHOTO CONTRACT

Nelson reported that they are basically fulfilling the MPO Work Program as both cities have expressed a keen interest in getting the aerial photos updated. She stated that these photos are used quite a bit by both cities, and need to be updated periodically in order to ensure we have the most current information available.

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO APPROVE HIRING AERO-METRICS TO PERFORM THE AERIAL IMAGERY PROJECT PER THE SELECTIONS COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH THEM..

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

MATTER OF DRAFT 2010-2013 T.I.P.

Haugen reported that in the packets are copies of the latest draft, which is up-to-date with all of the projects that we are aware of that should be programmed. He stated that the basis of this document is that we have an existing 2009-2012 T.I.P., from which most of the projects have been carried forward, with some having been modified slightly. He said that back in December we received project requests for 2013, as well as for some other years, and all of those projects

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

were funded with the exception of Grand Forks' request for reconstruction of 47th Avenue South between Washington and Columbia Road using urban monies.

Haugen commented that a public hearing was held during Wednesday's Technical Advisory Committee meeting two weeks ago, and no comments were received. He stated that the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the document, and are recommending approval.

***MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY BEAUCHAMP, TO APPROVE THE DRAFT
FY2010-2013 T.I.P. AS SUBMITTED.***

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF DRAFT TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION PLAN RFP

Haugen stated that this is in the MPO's 2009-2010 Annual Work Program. He explained that in 2009 we were going to do Columbia Road, and then in 2010 we were going to tackle Washington, DeMers, Gateway Drive, and 42nd Street, but we are now drafting the RFP to hire a consultant to assist us with all of those roadways, covering the remainder of this year and then 2010 as well.

Haugen said that this is a study that will mirror what we achieved on 32nd Avenue South, where we did upgrade the traffic signals, and implemented a new timing plan to make traffic flow better. He stated that the RFP has been reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee, and they are recommending approval. He added that once approved the RFP will be sent out to those on our consultant list, and the results will be brought back to this body in June for approval of the recommended consultant.

***MOVED BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY LEIGH, TO APPROVE THE DRAFT RFP
SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION PLAN.***

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

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF DRAFT BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE SCOPE OF WORK

Haugen reported that our Long Range Transportation Plan needs to cover the four primary modes of transportation, and the Bike/Pedestrian Plan is one of those four modes, and needs to be updated. He stated that we did identify in our work program that we would examine this element, as well as the ADA Curb Ramp Transition Plan sub-element.

Haugen pointed out that the Scope-of-Work was included in the packets, as well as a copy of map that shows our current existing plus planned bikeway network for the metropolitan area.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

Haugen commented that this will be done in-house, and will be completed by the end of 2009. He said that the Technical Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Draft Scope-of-Work.

Grassel stated that he noticed that it includes the installation of two in-pavement crossing lights. He asked if that is the existing ones or new ones. Haugen responded that it is the existing ones at Sherlock Park and the Golf Course.

Malm asked what is going to be done about a pedestrian river crossing for the downtown area. He stated that he is asked this by people all the time, and it will become even more of an issue when the Sorlie Bridge is under construction. Haugen responded that he did e-mail the current recommendations concerning the replacement of the Sorlie Bridge. He explained that it was a MNDOT document, CRAVE (Cost Risk Analysis Value Engineering), and the recommendation is to replace the Sorlie Bridge, and to have a separate bike/ped bridge, as our downtown plan suggests, utilizing the center pier.

Grassel commented that all he knows is that while the Sorlie Bridge was closed for this latest flood event, a timeframe of about three weeks, all he heard were complaints from people that they wanted that bridge opened as soon as possible, so he hates to think how bad it will be when it closes for 18 months. He stated that he doesn't see the bridge being replaced in 2018 for the simple reason that the Minnesota Historical Society will be involved, and to get them to agree to anything takes forever. Haugen responded that the 2018 date is an important one as it is the end of MNDOT's 10-year bridge plan. He explained that last year Minnesota programmed quite a few billion dollars to replace these fracture critical bridges throughout the state, and they have ten years to accomplish that, which means they need to have it completed by 2018. He added that the Kennedy Bridge is a part of that plan as well, and is scheduled for construction/reconstruction in 2016.

Haugen reported that as part of the CRAVE report you will see that they did identify that the Historical Society needs to be involved in the process, and they also identified some things they can do to ensure the bridge is less of a flood impediment, and will not need to close as long during flooding events. He said that they will be looking at ways in which to "soften" that 18-month timeline as much as possible, and that would include having a separate facility up and running before removal of the existing bridge so that there remains a connection between the two downtowns.

Grassel stated that this latest flood event certainly solidifies our need for another high and dry bridge between the two communities. Malm responded that Mr. Strandell and himself are seeing that the Thompson Bridge gets completed as soon as possible.

Christensen asked if there would be any stimulus funds available to get the Merrifield ramp constructed. Haugen responded that there is always a chance, but it isn't programmed right now. Christensen asked when it would be programmed. Haugen responded that we will be communicating with the counties, whom have been identified as the lead agencies on that project

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

in order to determine where it fits with their priorities. He added that this is true, as well with the other agencies, including the City, in terms of how and when they might be able to assist with the funding. Christensen asked if both cities wouldn't be assisting with funding. Haugen asked if Mr. Christensen was referring to the ramp, or interchange, or the bridge. Christensen responded that he was talking about the interchange, as you aren't going to do a bridge without an interchange. Haugen responded that you could do an interchange without a bridge, it makes some sense to do so in-fact.

Grassel said that he thought that North Dakota wasn't going to have any funding for a ramp until 2012. He reminded everyone that meetings were held a few years ago with Brown Corporation and others regarding this project, and it is his recollection that no funding would be available until at least 2012. Christensen said, though, that it is pretty close to 2012, it is closer to 2012 than 2018 when your talking about the Sorlie Bridge. Grassel commented that he always thought that they were going to do something with the ramps at Merrifield in 2012. Haugen responded that the project is not programmed in 2012 at this time, and the State will not program it until a local agency takes the lead on it, and since it is a county road going to the overpass, the county is the likely agency needing to take the lead. He added that there needs to be a partnership among the County, City, State, and the property owners to make this happen, and right now the property owners are interested, but it doesn't appear that the County or State are interested at this time.

Malm reported that the problem is that the County needed to use all their available funding to get the Thompson Bridge project funded, because the State, in it's wisdom, said that they would give us stimulus money, but we still have to pay 20% of the cost of the project, which means using all available funding to cover that 20%. He added that he has brought this issue up to the Legislature before, and nobody wants to talk about the interchange, and there isn't any support from the City or the State DOT either.

Christensen said, then, that we need to go with the basics. He stated that we are the MPO, and we should probably do MPO things, which is do we want to tell Mr. Haugen to get on this, and get it programmed. Malm responded that that would be fine. Christensen said, then, that we need to do that. He added that the second issue is that we don't know who will be sitting at this table in 2018, and, let's be quite honest, how are you going to build a pedestrian bridge, and why would you bother with a pedestrian bridge because they aren't going to close traffic 100% on the Sorlie Bridge for 18-months anyway. Haugen responded that right now they can't see any other way but to close traffic 100% during those 18-months. Christensen said that he would imagine, in his lexicon, he would call that rather "myopic" because, although he doesn't build bridges, he knows that there are two lanes and they can build one half at a time. He asked how much that bridge will cost us, and whether we honestly think the cities will step up and spend however many millions it will cost to build a pedestrian bridge, we don't have the money to do it, so lets focus on something that's real.

Malm said that he understands what Mr. Christensen is saying, but Mr. Haugen, per our request, sent a letter indicating our desire to see the interchange constructed, but it doesn't appear that anyone is interested. He added that he has been to the Legislature and to the NDDOT and he hasn't been able to get anywhere, and they just say that they don't build bridges or roads, that it is a local project.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

Christensen commented that we have a budget of \$500,000, and now we are going to be spending some money on bikepaths, but we need a bridge, and you need a bridge, and we decided a long time ago that we needed a bridge at Merrifield, and when that bridge was done we would focus on another bridge in the City, that's our plan, so lets tell our staff to focus on getting this done.

MOVED BY CHRISTENSEN, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO REQUEST THAT MPO STAFF FOCUS ON GETTING THE MERRIFIELD RAMP, AND THEN THE MERRIFIELD BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN THEN FOCUS ON AN INTER-CITY BRIDGE.

Grassel stated that he agrees that anytime we can start moving on local bridges, then we should do it. He added that this issue has been discussed, and kicked around for some time, and we even came close to making an agreement at one time, and then nothing was done, so he thinks this is the right decision to make, that we start moving forward with this.

Christensen said that he is talking today about the Merrifield Bridge, and he isn't saying where the next bridge in this town will be located, but he is saying that this is what we said we were going to do and once the Merrifield Bridge is constructed, then we can start working on the next inter-city bridge, wherever that is located.

Grassel commented that it took East Grand Forks two years to get garbage containers, so if we want that bridge done anytime soon we better start working on it now because his grandchildren will be old before it is done. Christensen said that he doesn't know about that, but he does think we need to focus on the long range things rather than thinking about another pedestrian crossing in the downtown area because once you get the Sorlie rebuilt you will have a pedestrian crossing then because they will widen both sides at that time, so we will just look silly, beyond silly if we put in another pedestrian bridge. Grassel stated that he thinks there are federal monies available for a pedestrian bridge as part of the Sorlie reconstruction project. Haugen responded that the pedestrian bridge is part of the Sorlie Bridge replacement costs, so there won't be a need to find additional funding to construct it. He added that from their value engineering point of view they have said that there is better value in having a separate pedestrian bridge built, to have it constructed and in place before the Sorlie Bridge is rebuilt, and that is the way they are proceeding with the replacement project. Christensen asked how much local match would be necessary. Haugen responded that the standard match for the Sorlie Bridge for Grand Forks would be 10%. Christensen asked if that includes both bridges. Haugen responded it did, and added that the total project is currently projected to cost \$29,000,000. Christensen asked how much East Grand Forks would need to kick in. Haugen responded that MNDOT has a different type of funding arrangement, and it isn't clear yet as to what the local amount will be at this time.

Haugen added that the Kennedy Bridge, because it is a State road, the funding match will be 80% Federal and 20% State.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

Christensen asked then, assuming that the drop dead date of 2018 remains in effect, when would you start building a pedestrian bridge. Haugen responded that it would most likely be built in 2017.

Beauchamp stated that he supports the interchange at Merrifield, but he also supports the bridge that would tie in the other end of that roadway, and he doesn't want any flim-flamming here so we only get half of the project done. Christensen responded that there isn't any flim-flamming going on, that we need to get it done so we can get the bridge done as well.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Christensen said we now need to talk about the pedestrian bridge because you don't build a bridge in one year. He stated that he would like to have an idea on this because we have a capital plan and the cost of this bridge is \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000, and we need to know that we will be in a position to fund it on the Grand Forks side, so if you can't tell him could you get that information to the Technical Advisory Committee so that the City Council gets it in their 2009 budgeting process because that would take it five years out to 2014, and that is probably when it would happen, if it happens.

Malm stated that he thinks we just need to instruct Mr. Haugen to see if there is any way to speed up the building of the bridges. He asked if we could divide the project, and get the pedestrian bridge in as soon as there is money available. Christensen commented that there will most likely be someone else on the City Council then, but if he were there we would not build a pedestrian bridge without building a Sorlie Bridge, they are hand-in-hand, not two projects. He added that Grand Forks isn't going to pony-up \$4,000,000 to build a pedestrian bridge unless we know the Sorlie is coming down, and Mr. Grassel said that it isn't going to happen until the Historical Society is placated.

Malm said that that is the realism of what is going to take place. Christensen stated that realism works, it seems to work. Malm said, then, that as far as he is concerned, we need to try to move forward and see what we can do about this, have Mr. Haugen check to see if there is a way to separate them out, and to find out when the Sorlie will in-fact be done.

Adams commented that the real question here is what will the pedestrian bridge cost, because if it only costs \$1,000,000, that would mean that our 10% local share would be a lot less than the \$4,000,000 being discussed. He stated that until we have an idea of what the pedestrian bridge will actually cost, we can only make assumptions as to what our 10% share will be, but in any event it would certainly be less than if both bridges would be done under one project. He added that if we were to get the pedestrian bridge in place, and the Sorlie were never done, that wouldn't be the end of the world, but if we have to have one to start with, and we need to put the pedestrian bridge in first in order to get the other bridge done, then that's what we have to do. Christensen responded that that's how you get it through, and that how you look stupid when people say you're building a pedestrian bridge and paying for it when the eastside isn't, that's

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009**

what happens when you get criticized on talk shows, and through letters to the editor, but the other thing is we went out and studied to do the 4th Avenue Corridor anticipating the Sorlie Bridge closing, and we need to get that funded as that is just as important, if not more important than a pedestrian bridge.

Malm agreed, adding that everything is done. Christensen commented that Mr. Haugen did write a letter to the Mayor stating that we would like to see that corridor funded, so now we need to do some follow-up to find the funding to do it because that is a another way of not having to build a bridge. He stated that he would follow up on that with his City Council.

Christensen asked if staff could give periodic updates on the status of the Merrifield Bridge and Interchange projects. Malm requested that the issue be placed on the agenda at least every three months.

Haugen commented that we still need approval of the Bike/Pedestrian Plan as well.

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO APPROVE THE DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE.

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

Voting Nay: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY ADAMS, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 22ND, 2009, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:40 P.M.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant