

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 9th, 2009 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-101**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the December 9th, 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: Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planning; Stacey Hanson, NDDOT-Bismarck (Via Conference Call); Ryan Brooks (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planning; Dustin Lang, NDDOT-Grand Forks District; Greg Boppre, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit; Denny Johnson, NDDOT-Bismarck (Via Conference Call); Joe McKinnon, MNDOT-Bemidji; and Rich Sanders, Polk County Engineer.

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen reported that a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen stated that because there are some new faces here today, he would appreciate it if everyone could please give a brief introduction of themselves.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 12TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY LANG, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 12TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SUBJECT TO ANY CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS THAT MAY BE SUBMITTED BY NDDOT.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF ND PROJECTS FOR 2011-2014 T.I.P. CONSIDERATION

Haugen referred to the staff report included in the packet, and pointed out that it indicates that staff did not receive complete information for the projects being considered for the 2011-2014 T.I.P.. He added that he did include copies of the City staff report that was submitted to the City Council, and stated that approval was given.

Haugen referred to the list of projects, and explained that it shows both the regional and urban projects being considered. He explained that attached to the City staff report was a list of projects that the State of North Dakota had included with a letter they sent in September. He added that Les Noehre and himself provided updates to the list of projects, which are also included in the packet as well.

Haugen distributed copies of slides (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request), and explained that he would now like to give a brief presentation on what our December actions are; including looking at the projects submitted to determine how consistent they are with our current T.I.P., as well as to determine how consistent the new projects are with our Long Range Transportation Plan, and prioritize them.

Presentation ensued.

Haugen explained that what the MPO is tasked to do in December, on the North Dakota side, is to ensure that the projects are consistent with our plan and to prioritize them. He referred to a map of the study area, and stated that anything included within this area receiving federal funding, or needing to have federal action, should be submitted to the MPO for our processing and knowledge.

Haugen commented that the current T.I.P. is for FY 2010-2013. He stated that we need to remember that projects listed in 2011 were first committed in 2007, projects listed in 2012 were committed in 2008, and so on, and while the last two years in a T.I.P. are somewhat more fluid than the first two years, we still need to ensure that the whole document is fiscally constrained.

Haugen reported that the three programs we are discussing today are the Urban Roads Program, the Regional Highway Program, and the Interstate Program.

Haugen explained that even though we just approved a T.I.P., we are going to look back at all of the projects that were programmed for three years of the new T.I.P., and then will also look at those added last year. He stated that as he noted earlier; as these things were being submitted to him some issues arose, the first being that the December 2nd deadline for submittal was not adhered to as information finally started to come in late on December 3rd and on December 4th, with some of the necessary documents still missing. He added that because he received this information late, he was only able to raise some issues late in the process, as will be noted on later slides.

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Haugen stated that he is somewhat puzzled as to why they provided an update to projects, why they weren't noted, corrected, or a revised sheet provided indicating that a lot of the things shown on the list had been changed, moved, and deleted. He said that it would have been helpful to the process if it had been shown instead of the original bad list.

Haugen commented that he is also discovering that we really don't have a year of expenditure taking place. He reported that many of the projects are using old scoping worksheets, and old cost estimates, and, in-fact, there are some cost estimates dating back to 2005 for consideration in 2014. He pointed out that he highlighted a portion of the Grand Forks list given to their City Council, and, looking at the numbers to the far right, you will see that they try to keep a running total of what funds are still available to them, and they are subtracting the 2008 cost estimates, and the 2009 cost estimates, but they aren't adjusting them for inflation, so, as we all learned with our fiscal constraint lesson, inflation is rising faster than the revenues are, so the Urban Roads Program has been frozen at about \$3,000,000 a year, and the cost estimates are being frozen, but in reality those cost estimates should be adjusted to the year of expenditure, so there should be less purchasing power occurring, but that isn't reflected on these sheets.

Haugen stated that the question is really, how do we catch up with the year of expenditure, and he did e-mail Stacey Hanson, Denny Johnson, and Paul Benning that question, and he wondered if they had a response. Hanson responded that she asked Paul Benning to look into this issue as he was the MPO Representative back in 2007. Haugen said, then, that basically all the projects we have, and the cost estimates shown are not adjusted cost estimates, but are instead reflecting the year in which they were created, and some, again, go back to 2005.

Haugen reported that he also asked for some additional information, with a supplemental questionnaire being sent out, and didn't get much of a response. He pointed out that there isn't anyone here today from the City of Grand Forks Engineering Department, and he was hoping to get some feedback on this, but some of what they did get back was good, and some was not, so we are still absent of some of the scoping worksheets telling us what the projects will ultimately be scoped as, and we are absent of cost estimates that have been updated, and we are also missing some of the supplemental information, so it made it difficult for staff to work with.

Haugen pointed out that in 2010 there are some projects changes occurring from the current T.I.P./S.T.I.P., with the big one being the Kennedy Bridge Pier Repair. He stated that it was discussed shortly after we approved the last T.I.P. that both MNDOT and NDDOT were not going to pursue this repair until the 2016 major rehabilitation project for the bridge. He said that they continue, as a pending or illustrative project, a section of DeMers Avenue. He explained that they still hope that it will be funded with the FY2010 appropriations given to North Dakota, however if that does not occur, this project will just get pushed back as a pending project to the next year. He commented that they also had an issue with a project on U.S. 2, in terms of the total dollar amount not matching in the T.I.P. and S.T.I.P. He asked which document is correct. Hanson responded that she would look into that and get back to him.

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Haugen commented that there were a lot of changes in 2011 to the Interstate projects. He said that basically a lot of these projects are going to take place between 32nd Avenue and North Washington. He pointed out that the drainage improvements that were shown at an estimated cost of about \$600,000 are being dropped, and there was going to be a maintenance or CPR grinding done, at a cost of about \$900,000, that will be dropped as well. He said that he isn't sure about the operational improvements, whether they are still programmed to occur or not. Lang responded that he would think those would be dropped as well. Haugen said, then, that that would mean an additional \$800,000 in project costs being dropped in 2011. He stated that the good news is that 2012 and 2013 projects will remain the same at this time, however the cost estimates do not reflect the year of expenditure.

Haugen reported that the new-year is 2014, and on the Urban side Grand Forks has three projects shown. He referred to the City's staff report to City Council, and explained that they typically put a priority order for their Urban Roads Program, and you can see that there is a URP1, URP2, and URP3 for 2013, but that is not the case in 2014, so he has developed a list he feels they would most likely want them to be in. He pointed out that the number one priority is the 47th Avenue Reconstruction project, which is a project that was submitted for 2013 but that did not get programmed, so they are carrying it over to 2014. He stated that the second priority is a continuation of reconstruction of Columbia Road, southward, with the DeMers to 11th Avenue section of Columbia Road being done in 2013, and the 11th Avenue to Knight Drive section being done in 2014. He said that the last thing, which is something that has been done in the past, is to include a placeholder for future intersection improvements, and as we get further into the program we will identify specifically where that improvement will take place. He added that some of the cost estimates are 2008, and some are 2009.

Haugen stated that on the Regional side, last year there were three projects submitted for inclusion on 2014. He explained that the Gateway Drive projects were resubmitted for consideration, with the first one located at Columbia to Red River, which is shown with a 2005 cost estimate; the I-29 to 55th Street, which is shown with a 2007 cost estimate. He added that last year they also identified the interchange at 32nd Avenue and 42nd Street as a possible project for 2014, but they did not do so. He said that they also ask for one year beyond the four years of the T.I.P., and they are submitting the reconstruction of Washington Street Underpass. He explained that they did not receive an updated scoping worksheet on this project, and he knows that Mr. Noehre is in the process of working on one at this time, but in 2005 they estimated \$50,000,000 to do the underpass. He added that they are also looking at rehabilitation of DeMers Avenue from I-29 to the firestation at an estimated cost of \$6,300,000, which is a 2009 cost estimate.

Haugen commented that there isn't anything here that would indicate that these projects are not consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan, at least in terms of the project perimeters, but what he doesn't know is how to address the year of expenditures. He added that when it comes to our next draft T.I.P. there should be some adjustments made to these cost estimates to reflect the year they are programmed.

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Haugen stated that the MPOs task is to review these projects to determine whether or not they are consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan, and then to give them a priority order, so, assuming that the City of Grand Forks would like their projects prioritized in the order they are listed on the sheet we received in 2014, staff would recommend that we find them consistent and to prioritize them as listed.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2011-2014 T.I.P. PROJECT LIST AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN, AND TO PRIORITIZE THE PROJECTS AS SUBMITTED.

Brooks asked who did not submit the scoping worksheets as required. Haugen responded that on the Urban side he received all of the projects from the urban requests, which are just signed by the City; and on the Regional side they are signed by both the City and the District, and those are the ones he received that are based on old work. He added that what he received was late, but he believes he has almost a complete urban list, and the scoping worksheets on the Urban side, but there is still work being done on the Regional side.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF PROPOSED 2010 UPWP AMENDMENT

Haugen reported that last month he highlighted, to the committee, to forward some project activity. He stated that the only formal request received was to help both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks update their Land Use Plans, which is a benefit to the MPO because when we update our Transportation Plan, it is based on the latest Land Use Plan, and as the draft language in the work program indicates, there is also a strong connection between land use and transportation. He said that currently the DOT, EPA, and HUD have a partnership in place with some principles to try to follow through to ensure that the connection remains strong, and tries to account for some of the climate change activities that are taking place.

Haugen stated that, historically, Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, and the MPO have cooperatively developed these land use plans with our transportation plans so they are coordinated and cooperative. He added that we have also been working with Grand Forks on its Green Three Initiative already on some climate change issues.

Haugen said, again, that this is the only project we received, although it is a pretty encompassing one, using up the entire amount of funding we still had available. He explained that we will continue with the rest of the work activities already identified.

Haugen reported that some of the work on the Land Use Plan Updates will be completed by MPO staff, and some by the appropriate city staff. He added that with the land use plans being updated, when we start doing our traffic forecasting for our transportation model, it will reflect

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what is believed to be the future growth areas of both communities. He said that on the North Dakota side there has been a change on who has jurisdiction over certain geographies within our study area, so we will have to work with those new jurisdictions, or their new authorities, to understand their land use plans and their growth potential out to the year 2040, so we can forecasting travel demand the best we can for the future.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2010 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF RAILROAD CROSSING STUDY UPDATE

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that it includes two refinements for the options available to Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

Haugen reported that for the East Grand Forks side it boiled down to if they are going to establish a quiet zone in the near future, one option would require the closure of one of their crossings, thus considerably reducing the amount of funding required. He stated that their City Council held a working session last evening, and, after some discussion it appears that the consensus is that they don't want to close any of their crossings, so they will be looking at the \$300,000 option of increasing the safety measures at three crossings instead of two, and trying to find the funding to add a second set of gate arms at the 3rd Street crossing, and the constant warning time at the 2nd Avenue crossing.

Haugen referred to the packet, and went over the various options available to both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

Haugen reported that a meeting will be held next Tuesday with the Grand Forks County Commission. He explained that they receive a lot of comments on this from the County Building tenants commissioners, so they will meet to show them what the difference is between the medians at 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets, and how it impacts some of their parking area and some of their parking lots, to make sure they understand what is involved with each alternative. He added that it will then go to the Service Safety Committee to get an idea of which scenario the Grand Forks City Council will pursue. He stated that they hope to have a quiet zone established in 2010

Haugen said that the State Mill Spur is a separate study and they will show more information over the next two months on that study.

Brooks asked if the grade separation project on the East Grand Forks side is still on the radar, the Central Avenue Spine. Haugen responded that it is still a desired concept, and the project itself

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is an illustrative project in the plan. He explained that in order to maintain an intersection with U.S. Business 2 on the north side of the underpass we would have to drop it down considerably, and they aren't sure they have total agreement from MNDOT on that. He added that the other reason it is still an illustrative project is due to the cost impact from its estimated cost of over \$8,000,000. Brooks asked if this study looked at how this spine concept might have an impact on whether or not they would need close one of the crossings, if it would make it easier to close one of the crossings because once that spine were implemented it would be used more and would seem like it would make it easier to close one of the crossings. Haugen responded that it was looked at to a limited extent, but he thinks the outcome was that it would cost too much for it to happen anytime soon, so they feel they need to do the safety improvements at grade, and hope that at some future time the grade separation will occur.

Information only.

MATTER OF PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Kouba reported that Goodpointe has basically finished their surveying of the pavement throughout the area, and we have requested them to come and do some training on the software, which has been scheduled to occur on December 16th and 17th. She stated that she also attached an agenda for those training sessions for review.

Kouba explained that the software is basically a web-based software, so we won't have to download software on to anyone's computer, but can just go on-line to use it.

Haugen asked how many people are signed up to attend the training. Kouba responded that there are eight people signed up at this time. She added that anyone wishing to attend does need to bring a laptop with them.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. S.T.I.P. Funding Guidance

Haugen stated that there was a handout distributed identifying what the future funding estimates are for the ATP targets for Minnesota. He added that the last page shows what our subtarget amounts are for the four years of the next T.I.P./S.T.I.P. cycle.

Haugen commented that project submittal for these funds are due in January.

2. JOBS Bill

Haugen commented that he is sure that everyone has been hearing a lot about a new JOBS Bill, or a second stimulus, or whatever you want to call it, and you should stay posted on it. He added

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that we still have the FY2010 budget to be approved, and reauthorization is in the mix with December 18th being the expiration date of the current authorization, so something will need to be done prior to that date in order for us to still see a trickle down of funds in 2010.

Boppre stated that he actually had a meeting yesterday with a Franken staff person, at which discussion was held on transportation issues. He added that Franken and Obestar share a mutual employee, so there is a tie between the two, which may be beneficial to us as well.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY BOPPRE, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 9TH,
2009, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:10 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant