

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 12th, 2010 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-102**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the May 12th, 2010, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:34 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; Ryan Brooks (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planning; Dustin Lang, NDDOT-Grand Forks District; Dean Rau, Grand Forks City Engineering; Jane Williams, Grand Forks City Engineering; Joe McKinnon, MNDOT Planning-Bemidji; Greg Boppre, EGF Consulting Engineer; and Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit.

Guests present were: Sara Aultman, MNDOT-St. Paul; Stephanie Hickman, FHWA-North Dakota; Al Grasser, Grand Forks City Engineer; Brady Mallroy, WDAZ; and Susan Moe, FHWA-Minnesota (Via Conference Call).

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen reported that a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen asked that, because there are some new faces present today, everyone please give a brief introduction of themselves and the organization they represent.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 14TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY BOPPRE, TO APPROVE THE APRIL 14TH, 2010,
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF DRAFT 2011-2014 T.I.P. – NORTH DAKOTA

Haugen commented that, as you will recall, we adopted a Draft T.I.P. for Minnesota at our meeting last month, and anticipated doing the same for North Dakota this month, however we will not be able to do that at this time, but hope that we will be able to do so at our June meeting.

Hanson reported that the final projects went out of their office this past Friday, so all the jurisdictions should know which projects were able to be funded, and they should be able to move forward with the Draft T.I.P..

Haugen referred to the staff report, included in the packet, and pointed out that the last sentence reports that we are still waiting to hear from FAA concerning the funding for the Airport Road reconstruction project, therefore, we are unable to amend that project into our T.I.P. at this time either.

Haugen commented that the information following the staff report should have accompanied Agenda Item X, therefore we will be referring to it when we get to that agenda item later in the meeting.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE TO THE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Haugen reported that, as the staff report indicates, discussion was held at our April meeting concerning some discrepancies that were found with our current Functional Classification Map for the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. He explained that staff has been working with State, County, and City staff to work out these inconsistencies, and a new map, illustrating the necessary changes for the North Dakota side, was included in the packets.

Kouba stated that, basically, due to a request from the City of Grand Forks, they have included two new roadways on the functional class system. She pointed out that they added the 48th extension from 32nd to 17th as a minor arterial, and 20th Avenue from Columbia Road to 20th Street South as a collector.

Kouba referred to a table, included in the packet, and pointed out that with these additions, as well as the addition of the ramps on Interstate 29, and the overpass ramps on Columbia Road and DeMers Avenue, both the percentages and the number of miles have increased slightly.

Kouba commented that, basically we have increased some of our mileage, and, although we have still managed to stay within the percentages, we are still below on the local and a little over in the collectors and the principle arterials.

Hickman asked if this has been discussed and coordinated with the district and central office for the NDDOT. Haugen responded that we highlighted the changes being proposed at our last

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Technical Advisory Committee, so they were coordinated at that time. He added that the request to add 20th Avenue, and changing South 48th Street from a future to an existing functionally classified roadway, was made by the City of Grand Forks.

Kouba stated that they are basically asking for approval of the new functionally classified map for the City of Grand Forks, so that it can be sent to the NDDOT for their approval as well.

Haugen commented that there was one additional change made to the map. He explained that the State's map shows North Washington Street, or North 81 as being a minor arterial and ours showed it as a minor collector, so we changed our map to correspond with the State's classification. He added that the area included in the change is that portion of North Washington, or North 81, from 27th Avenue North to the intersection of I-29 and North Washington. Williams asked if this affected the mileage. Haugen responded that some of the minor arterial mileage did increase with this change.

Williams referred to the map, and commented that there are some additional minor changes that need to be made, none, however, that would affect mileage or percentage, mostly just labeling changes, that she would like to work with Teri on.

MOVED BY WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE DRAFT FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP FOR GRAND FORKS, SUBJECT TO MINOR LABELING CHANGES.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Aultman gave a brief update on proposed changes to the Minnesota Functional Classification map. She stated that there are some additional roadways that MNDOT would like to see classified as principal arterials, and added that they did touch base with Joe McKinnon, District Office, regarding this.

Aultman reported that they looked at the ADT, specifically existing roadways that are already classified as principal arterials, to see how they fit within the federal guidelines that suggest that we have 5 to 10 percent of our mileage classified as principal arterials, and they concluded that they should make Bygland Road a principal arterial as well. She added that they also decided that the other roads that are being proposed be made principal arterials should wait for reclassification as they don't believe that with the current ADT they would be justified. Haugen pointed out that Teri has already made these proposed changes to the map being shown on the screen.

Aultman stated that a finalized map should be available for the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

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MATTER OF UPDATE ON SIGNAL COORDINATION STUDY

Haugen reported that last fall they presented the Columbia Road Corridor results; and the upgraded signal equipment and timing plans were implemented along that corridor as well. He said that, initially they had hoped to have installed the upgraded equipment and timing plans on the Washington and Gateway Drive corridors by now as well, but part of the funding for this was to come from a stimulus grant out the Department of Energy, and because it took longer to access those monies, this has not yet taken place. Williams added that the equipment for those corridors has not yet been purchased. Haugen stated, then, that the upgrades and timing plans for those two corridors will most likely not be installed until this fall. He added that initially we had hoped to have the Washington and Gateway corridors done in the spring, and then have the DeMers and 42nd Street corridors done in the fall, but it now appears that all four will be implemented in the fall instead.

Haugen stated that they are also upgrading the signal for the transit system as well. He said that they currently have some pre-emption that could occur, but they are going to upgrade it. He added that part of the consultant's job is to help us integrate the transit priority into the signal coordination system.

Bergman reported that all the transit equipment has been purchased, and has been installed in the vehicles, however they are now just waiting for the intersection equipment to be installed as well. He said it is his understanding that this will begin on Monday.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON RAILROAD CROSSING STUDY

Haugen reported that, as you are aware, we have three different components to this study. He referred to the staff report, and stated that he would like to begin with the quiet zone portion of the study first.

Haugen commented that little has changed in regard to the amount of progress made with this portion of the study. He stated that they are essentially in the same position they were last month, however that should change once BNSF staff meets with Federal Railroad and City staff next week concerning what kind of equipment upgrade is truly necessary in order for the three crossings out by Amtrak to be eligible for quiet zone status. He explained that there is a discrepancy between what BNSF feels is necessary for these three crossings to be eligible for quiet zone status, and what the consultant feels is necessary for these three crossings to be eligible for quiet zone status, so Federal Railroad will be doing a peer review to help determine which entity is correct.

Haugen reported that, in regard to the State Mill Spur portion of the study, they are in the process of drafting a report, and are trying to arrange public input meetings the first week of June.

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Haugen reported that in terms of the Bacon Road Closure portion of the study, the issue of the State Mill possibly using a Unit Train has been our greatest concern. He stated that they have been waiting for official word from the division of BNSF that addresses the Unit Train landing facilities, and their analysis as to what can occur up on the State Mill property as to whether or not they can accommodate a Unit Train. He pointed out that if a Unit Train is capable of being accommodated on the State Mill property, this would impact the entire study considerably.

Haugen commented that they are going to try to hold a meeting with the property owners adjacent to Bacon Road as BNSF and the State Mill would still like us to consider closing Bacon Road regardless of whether or not they use a Unit Train, so we need to get input from the property owners as to how they would feel about closing Bacon Road.

Haugen explained that the major issue with closing Bacon Road is the fact that there are three sets of tracks crossing at that location, and all three sets are used to maneuver cars in and out of their flour facility. He added that with it being a public crossing, there is also a requirement that there be a 250-foot site distance clearance on either side of a crossing, which would result in the loss of about a dozen cars that could be cued into their loading facility, so they are hoping that they can ease their operation by making Bacon Road something other than a public crossing.

Haugen stated that the first meeting with the property owners focused on the impact the proposed Unit Train would have to the City of Grand Forks, and the next meeting will focus on the impact closing Bacon Road, regardless of whether or not a Unit Train is used, would have on the City as well.

Haugen commented that the State Mill had expected an answer on whether or not it is possible to accommodate a Unit Train, but BNSF has not yet given their recommendation at this time.

Williams asked if BNSF has said whether or not they would need to lay all new track. Haugen responded they would. He explained that they need to land 8,000 feet of train, and that 8,000 feet of train cannot impede on the current operations. Williams asked, then, if they would be laying the track side-by-side. Haugen responded that that was one option they looked at, however they were more convinced that looping it around would be better than a straight linear line along Mill Road. He pointed out that you not only run into 27th Avenue, but also into the English Coulee as well when trying to accommodate 8,000 feet of train.

Information only.

MATTER OF NEW T.I.P. PROCESS

Haugen referred to information included in the packet, and gave a brief power point presentation.

Haugen stated that as they move forward with this they are trying to identify, and get a better handle on the current process used for the area between the Federal Urban Aid Boundary and the MPO Study Area. He commented that there are three funding programs he is trying to get

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information/clarification on; 1) County Roads, 2) Rural Off-System Access Development, and 3) Bridge (on and off system). He explained that they have already submitted ranking and scoring sheets for the area shown in dark gray, and as they move out they run into some programs that they are not very familiar with, so that is what they are trying to identify.

Haugen reported that in terms of the County Road program, he is trying to even some things out from the S.T.I.P. document, just some basic information that shows how much is or was distributed in 2013. He stated that there is a formula used that allows for funds to only be spent on the County Major Collector Road System. He pointed out that according to the S.T.I.P. document, on November 13th there is some sort of three year program of projects being submitted to Federal Highway, and he is just wondering if this is something new, or in addition to our normal MPO T.I.P. timing process.

Haugen commented that in identifying the County Major Collector System, the next few maps in the power point highlight some areas for which we would like to have clarification on what can be spent and where. He referred to the maps and pointed out that one area in question is that area between Belmont Road and 62nd Avenue South, which is part of the Grand Forks County Road system, but is also within the Federal Urban Aid Boundary, and therefore not classified as a County Major Collector, which in turn makes it ineligible for federal aid on the County Roads Program. He added that this area is also not part of the City Street System, but is eligible for Urban Roads Program funds.

Haugen stated that one of the questions he has asked NDDOT is whether or not we can seek County Roads Program funds for those areas within the Urban Aid Boundary. Hanson responded that you can spend your urban dollars outside the city limits, but you have to stay within the urban aid boundary. Haugen commented that this is different than what they have been told in the past, explaining that during discussions regarding the Merrifield Road Bridge/Interchange Project, they were told that urban aid could be spent on that facility. Lang asked if that was because it is located within the Urban Aid Boundary. Haugen responded that Merrifield is not within the Urban Aid Boundary, but it is within the MPO Study area.

Haugen referred to a map, and pointed out that Merrifield Road is located on the County Major Collector System. He stated that the study area goes out to 62nd. He added that it is a county highway, just as Belmont is a county highway once we get past the city limit line.

Haugen stated that his question involves county roads that are not part of the city, but are within the Urban Aid Boundary, and whether or not they are eligible for county federal aid. Hanson responded that they have to be classified on the County Major Collector System to be eligible for county funds, however, if it were an off-system bridge it would be eligible for bridge funds, but the roadway itself would have to be a County Major Collector to be eligible for county funds. Haugen said, then, that because these roadways are in the Urban Aid Boundary they won't be classified as County Major Collectors. Hanson responded that that is correct, and explained that they can't classify them as County Major Collectors if they are in the Urban Aid Boundary, and that is something that has recently been asked of the DOT, and they verified that with Federal

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Highway. Haugen asked if they could offer a suggestion that they do as is done on the urban side where they don't use strict functional class, but instead use a simile of functional class to identify things like Urban Roads or Regional Primary or Regional Secondary, so that on the county side we could identify, perhaps, some county roads as something such as Urban County Major Collector Program, which is a funding program, not a functional class. Hickman responded that it is a funding program based on functional class. Haugen stated that they are functionally classified as minor arterials. Hanson responded that they are eligible for urban funds, and urban funds can be used, and if it is a county road the county would just have to pay the match, and as an MPO that is something that needs to be worked out with our jurisdictions.

Haugen referred to a slide of South Columbia Road that shows a one-mile stretch of roadway that is not classified as a County Major Collector, and is therefore not eligible for the County Roads Program. He stated that he has had discussions with the County Engineer about having this stretch of roadway included on the County Major system, and he encouraged him to approach the County Board to see if they would approve this and submit it to the DOT. He asked if this would be the only way to make this stretch of roadway eligible for federal aid. Hanson responded that that would be correct.

Haugen referred to the next slide, and commented that it shows a section of roadway on North 81. He pointed out that if you look at the County Major Collection System map, the area he identified on North 81, you would assume it is a County Major Collector, so he is wondering if it is a mapping error. Lang asked how he arrived at this deduction. Haugen responded that it is the color of the roadway on the map that gives that impression. He pointed out that all other State Highways are shown with a different color, this is the only State Highway shown in this color. Hanson responded that she would have to verify this with their Roadway Data people back in the Central Office. Lang commented that it would be his guess that it is a mapping error.

Haugen commented that there is a program called "The North Dakota Road Program" in the S.T.I.P. document. He said that he did e-mail these questions to Stacey Hanson, who has been busy and unable to reply yet, but annually the S.T.I.P. says that they solicit to the counties, projects that could be federally funded with this North Dakota Road Program, so he is just wondering if there is an application available to apply for these funds, and can it only be used on, getting back to Belmont, and 62nd in particular, is this an avenue that we could use to get some additional revenue sources into the Urban Aid Boundary. Hanson responded that she did do some checking on this, but it does appear that they do accept applications so there must be a form available, and she will try to get him a copy of it. She added that the funds can be used on county roads, but she doesn't know if it has to be a CMC or just a county road, so she will need to get clarification on that.

Haugen reported that in terms of the Bridge Program, there are on-system and off-system bridges, and there are some conflicting terms, or conflicting information on the local government manual versus what is in the S.T.I.P., and he is wondering if the 50/50 split of funds, with 50% to the State and 50% to the Counties, means that 50% is spent on on-system bridges and 50% on off-system bridges, and does it vary year to year. Hanson responded that 50% basically goes to

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State bridges and 50% is for County bridges. She explained that the 50% that goes to the County bridges is split up for on-system and off-system County bridges, and the 50% that goes to the State also includes, or takes care of any City bridges that are submitted for the bridge program, so the City portion comes out of the State's share, not the County's share.

Haugen asked if there was any good literature available on the bridge program, explaining how it is split out. Hanson responded that the information that they typically refer to comes out of the local government manual, but she can visit with both Planning and Bridge personnel to see if there is any other documentation available. She added that other information that might be helpful is, to be eligible for bridge replacement you have to have a sufficiency rating less than or equal to 50 from your bridge inspection, plus you must also be either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and then in order to eligible for rehabilitation you need to have a sufficiency rating greater than 50 or less than or equal to 80.

Haugen asked if Federal Urban Aid Boundary impacts whether it is on-system or off-system eligible. Hanson responded that on-system is basically any of the federal aid routes, so if you have a county bridge that is on a CMC route, it would be an on-system bridge; and if you have a city bridge that is on the urban roads system that would be an on-system bridge; and anything on the highway system is a on-system bridge. Haugen commented that Dean Rau was able to provide him with the 2-year inspection cycle for bridges in the Urban Aid Boundary. He asked why none of the State bridges, including the Kennedy, Sorlie, etc., were included on this document, and is there a third document that shows only the State bridges. Hanson commented that it is good to know that those bridges were not included on the list. She said that the list is generated by their Bridge Division, so she will visit with them to make sure that those bridges are included on the City's list, but she thinks that when they split it out it comes out to ownership, and the City probably only gets a list of bridges they own and have to maintain, and the State gets the list of any bridges on a State or U.S. Highway.

Haugen reported that in the S.T.I.P. document they talk about how the off-system bridges are selected, and he is wondering, again, if there is any type of application because it does talk about some of the justifications like traffic volume, safety factors, vehicle use, whether it is on a bus route, mail route, school route, etc., and is there some way the County identifies the justification for these bridges. Hanson responded that that is something she would need to talk to their County Managers about, but she doesn't think there is an application, that it is simply based on historical practice that when the counties get their bridge list they monitor them and they know which ones are eligible for projects.

Haugen stated that the next couple of slides just show the functionally obsolete and structurally deficient bridges statewide. He pointed out that he did blow up a portion of the map that indicates areas that might be the areas covered in our study area. He went over them briefly.

Haugen commented, again, that he did meet with the Grand Forks County Engineer, and provided a draft scoring and ranking sheet for the County Road Program, however there are still

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a lot of questions that need to be answered before it is presented to the Technical Advisory Committee, hopefully in June, but certainly by July.

Information only

MATTER OF FHWA'S PENDING POLICY CHANGE REGARDING NEPA & FISCAL CONSTRAINT

Haugen stated that this is probably not a pending policy change from Federal Highway, and it is more of a Minnesota issue, so Sara Aultman agreed to give a brief overview.

Aultman reported that Federal Highway passed a policy back in 2008 to help clarify NEPA, in that if you are going to have any kind of scoping document for a project, part of that project needs to be fiscally constrained. She explained that the issue they are having in St. Cloud is that, for whatever reason, they were not aware of the 2008 policy so their projects are not fiscally constrained. She stated that they submitted some of their scoping documents to FHWA about a year ago, and they have been kind of lingering in the office, and they thought it was actually a pending policy, so FHWA is now trying to figure out what to do with these documents.

Haugen commented that his only concern is actually on the North Dakota side, in that the City was processing a PCR for the 42nd Street Underpass, which is not in either our T.I.P. or the S.T.I.P., and will this fiscal constrained issue hold that up at all. Hickman responded that it has the potential to be held up, but she isn't as familiar with that as she is with some other things that are going on. Hanson asked if that document is on hold at this time, and does the City intend to move forward with it. Rau responded that it isn't a final PCR at this time, but they are working on it. Hanson stated, then, that there is always the potential for that project to be a City funded project because it isn't in their current federal programming.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Update From FHWA

None.

2. Update From MNDOT

Aultman reported that on the Minnesota side there is a Complete Streets Bill in the Legislature. She stated that it has passed the House, and there is a lot of interest there, so as that progresses she will share the information with the MPO and NDDOT.

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3. Update From NDDOT

Hanson reported that North Dakota Cities and Counties would have received, within the last couple of weeks, an e-mail from the DOT regarding Title VI, just as a good reminder of it's requirements and program efforts with respect to federal aid. She added that subsequent to that e-mail, a second e-mail went out notifying those jurisdictions of upcoming advisory group meetings that will be held in various locations across the state so that Cities and Counties, in their own Title VI efforts can attend these meetings and get to know the Advisory Groups that are in their local area.

Haugen commented that the MPO also received a letter from the DOT about Title VI, with a survey attached to it. Hanson stated that that would have come from their Civil Rights Office. She added that their Local Government Office, through the Civil Rights Office, was asked to basically get this same letter information and attachments out to the County Auditors and City Engineers as well, in order that the locals would receive information concerning the advisory group meetings that are being held as well.

Hanson reported that a big statewide wrap-up meeting will be held on May 17th. She explained that this is the final meeting in a series of meetings held across the state to get public input on the levels of service that roadways should be providing. She added that they will also be discussion transit issues as well. Haugen asked if there would be any availability of the materials on the web prior to, or soon after that meeting for those that can't make the trip. Hanson responded that that is a good question, and although she isn't working on this project she will check with those in charge, as she feels that it would be a good idea.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BROOKS, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 12TH, 2010,
MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:25 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Office Manager