

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 13th, 2009 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-101**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the January 13th, 2009, 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 (Via Conference Call); Charles Durrenberger (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; Al Grasser, Grand Forks City Engineering; and Jane Williams, Grand Forks City Traffic Engineer.

Guests present were: Stephanie Hickman, FHWA-Bismarck (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 Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Haugen reported that a quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Haugen introduced Matt Leal, GF/EGF MPO Intern, and asked that everyone please give a brief introduction of themselves, and that Matt also talk a little about himself as well.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 9TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lang referred to Page 8 of the minutes, and pointed out that it states that Franken and Oberstar are both Senators, when in-fact Mr. Oberstar is actually a Representative.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 9TH, 2009, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE NOTED CORRECTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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MATTER OF 2011-2014 MINNESOTA T.I.P. PROJECTS

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that they received one application from the City of East Grand Forks for the ATP's City Sub-Target Funds in 2014. He explained that this project is actually a familiar one to our T.I.P. as it was programmed to occur in 2010 for many years, however was recently delayed in order for the funds to be used for the 23rd Street N.W. project instead, therefore, since 2014 is when the City of East Grand Forks will again receive the Sub-Target Funds, it was decided that the City should apply once again for the 5th Avenue N.W./U.S. #2 Intersection Project. He referred to a conceptual drawing of the project, included in the packet, and pointed out that it came from the U.S. Highway 2 Access Management Study that was done for the City of East Grand Forks. He added that the previous cost estimates have been escalated to show the year of expenditure costs for this project. Boppre reported that the East Grand Forks City Council approved the application for this project at their meeting last week. Haugen added that a copy of the resolution was included in the packet as well.

Jane Williams, Grand Forks Engineering, reported present.

Haugen distributed some additional information, and explained that last Friday he received correspondence from MNDOT, concerning the addition of a project in our 2011-2014 T.I.P.. He explained that the project was originally included in our 2009-2012 T.I.P., and consisted of improvements on Highway 220, basically between Climax, MN and the intersection of U.S. Highway 2, to be done in 2012, but paid for in 2013, however was dropped from our current 2010-2013 T.I.P.. He pointed out that the project cost has been escalated to \$5.5 million.

Haugen added that on the back of the table he just distributed is a map. He explained that previously, when this project was programmed, it was asked that they consider improving the southbound movement of Highway 220 where it intersects with Old Highway 220/Bygland Road, so that southbound traffic does not have to stop, but instead make the small stretch of county road become the stop condition instead.

Haugen stated that both projects are consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan, and, because they are the only projects competing for funding, should be given a top priority ranking.

Bergman asked how the 5th Avenue N.W. Intersection project will affect the bus routes. Haugen responded that they will actually be discussing that when they do the route review later in the year.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE 2011-2014 T.I.P. PROJECT APPLICATION AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN, AND TO GIVE IT A PRIORITY RANKING.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Haugen commented that he would like to briefly discuss some transit issues. He explained that on the North Dakota side it was recently discovered that there are a lot of unspent rural transit monies, which are now being proposed by diverted to urban monies instead. He asked, if this were to occur would it all need to be used for capital items or could some of it be used for operating costs. Hanson responded that she does not know what the transit folks have been working on, and, unfortunately, Denny Johnson is out of the office attending training, however he should be available next week to answer that question. Bergman commented that the last he heard it could be used for capital items only.

Haugen stated, then, that until we know more about what may actually be available with the transit rural conversion, we do not really know what we will be programming for 5309 requests. He added that a conference call is scheduled for January 21st, to discuss 5309 funds, and possible state funding.

MATTER OF 2ND STIMULUS PLAN

Haugen reported that most everyone is now aware that Congress may act on a second stimulus bill. He said that the House already acted on a bill, but the Senate will most likely not do anything until February.

Haugen referred to the packet, and explained that he included information he received that gives an indication as to what might be happening with the bill. He added that one of the handouts was the transit section of the bill, that was distributed to transit operators on the North Dakota side, as to what they might expect for transit.

Haugen commented that a couple points of interest are the fact that the funding might be as much as we received with the first Stimulus Bill, or at least 75% of what we received; and the other is that the House changed the rule that the first 50% has to be obligated to it needing to be awarded, which is a major difference.

Hickman reported that the only bit of additional information she has is that currently the House version does state that it must be a contract award within 90-days, however it is still uncertain if the Senate version will do the same, but, certainly, if it comes out any differently we would have to go to conference, so beyond that there is very little additional information.

Hanson commented that the NDDOT has started identifying projects on the state system, mostly in the rural areas, to try to ensure we have enough projects available to cover 50% of our money within the 90-days, if that is how the language ends up being, so they are currently working on projects on the state side of things. She added that they are recommending that cities, counties, transit, etc., all start looking at trying to identify projects that might be candidates for funding.

Grasser stated that they are in the process of looking at projects, but if they set a 90-day timeline, quite frankly it would be an impossible target for them to meet unless they already have something in the bid process because plans have to be in ten-weeks prior to the bid opening,

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which is seventy-five days right there, and then once the bids are opened it takes an additional three to four weeks to award the project, so it would be almost impossible to meet that deadline. Hanson responded that their DOT management understands that for city and county projects it really wouldn't be very likely that they would be able to have them ready within that timeline, which is why the state started escalating the design on several of their projects in hope that they can cover the entire 50% of the monies within that 90-days, which would then give the cities, counties, and transportation enhancement a little breathing room and allow them to come in for the second 50%. She added, however, that they are also hoping that the language changes to allow for a longer timeline, which would be better for everyone, but they do want to be prepared in the event that does not occur.

Broppre said that he talked to Lou Tasa from MNDOT just yesterday, and, in the event that just this kind of thing would happen, they actually already have the second phase of the 23rd Street N.W. project reprogrammed. He commented that this same issue occurred with the first stimulus package, very few cities had any projects that could meet the timeline for funds, so only a few received stimulus money at that time, and that is something they don't want to see happen again, so he did have some conversations with Senator Franken's office about trying to make sure that smaller communities receive some of the funding this time as well.

Grasser asked if NDDOT would consider a half dozen projects for a February or March bid opening contingent on funding, if they could get the plans to them in the next three weeks. Hanson responded that any project they do would have to be included in both the T.I.P. and S.T.I.P., so with this possible second stimulus funding they will have to go through the normal process of doing T.I.P. and S.T.I.P. amendments. She stated, however, if there are some projects that could be ready, they would certainly like to know as soon as possible so they can help get them ready for the process.

Haugen reported that there are two projects that he is aware of that might be ready for stimulus funds, and they are the two signing projects on US 2 and I-29. He stated that they are already doing the solicitation of use and the project memorandum, and they are both currently programmed for 2011.

Information only.

MATTER OF RAILROAD CROSSING STUDY UPDATE

Haugen reported that both City Councils have taken action on the Railroad Crossing Study. He explained that the City of East Grand Forks is waiting to get gates and lights on all three of their downtown crossings prior to implementing a quiet zone. He said that one of the three will get upgraded in 2011. He stated that the City of Grand Forks did establish quiet zones at three of the four zones, adding that the fourth zone, the one on 32nd Avenue South by Longview Fiber will not be quieted at this time.

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Haugen commented that he just finished reviewing the draft report, and submitted some comments to SRF for inclusion in the report, and once that is done the final report will be distributed to the Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee for their review and comments as well.

Haugen reported that they held the kick-off meeting for the State Mill Spur portion of the study last month. He said that they are in the process of scheduling follow-up meetings in February and March, and hope to have the study completed soon. He added that just yesterday they heard from BNSF that they are willing to fund 50%, and the State Mill is willing to fund 50% of the third component of the proposed scope of work, which is to study the possible closure of Bacon Road.

Information only.

MATTER OF PRESENTATION OF PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Kouba referred to a power point slide presentation and explained that in 2008 both cities were photographed, and in 2009 we got the PCI and software back up and running so that anyone needing to use it within the City would have the ability to do so. She added, that in order for everyone to really understand how to use the information correctly, they provided training on the software as well.

Kouba referred to a map illustrating the condition index and went over it briefly, pointing out that the areas shown in yellow indicate those areas that are at the desired condition index level, meaning those roads are in good shape.

Kouba reported that Grand Forks needs to put the last two years of projects into ICON, and East Grand Forks needs to put all their projects into ICON. She explained that once the projects are in we can truly reflect what is happening on our roadway system, and then we can begin working on the budgets.

Grasser asked what factors were used in this program to determine the condition index. Kouba responded that Goodpointe determined the index. Williams stated that they used rideability, number of years, cracks, shifts, etc.. Grasser asked if rideability was determined by accelerometers in the vehicles. Williams responded it was.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Cost Estimating Webinar

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Haugen stated that next Wednesday morning the MPO is hosting a webinar on cost estimating in conjunction with Federal Highways. He said that the webinar begins at 9:30 a.m. in Conference Room A101.

Haugen reported that this is a North Dakota cost estimating webinar being provided by Federal Highways, and the other two MPOs and their districts will also be participating as well. Hickman commented that if there is anyone from East Grand Forks that would like to attend, they are certainly welcome to do so. She added that it entails cost estimating primarily for planners.

2. PTP Refresher Webinar Series

Haugen reported that they are also offering a PTP (Professional Transportation Planners) Refresher Webinar Series, which begins next Wednesday as well. Ellis stated that this series will run from January 20th through February 24th, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Conference Room A101.

3. February Technical Advisory Committee

Haugen asked, because of the PTP webinar taking place on Wednesday, February 10th, he was wondering if there would be a problem with moving the Technical Advisory Committee up to 12:00 noon or 12:30 p.m.. After some discussion it was determined that the February 10th Technical Advisory Committee would be held at 12:30 p.m. instead of 1:30 p.m..

4. DOE Grant Awarded

Haugen reported that we received a \$125,000 Department of Energy Grant for traffic signal coordination upgrades. He asked that Mr. Lang have Mr. Noehre get in touch with Ms. Williams about the \$40,000 the district was going to provide the City for these upgrades as well.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 13TH,
2009, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:10 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Executive Assistant