

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 14th, 2010 – 1:30 p.m.
Grand Forks City Hall Conference Room A-101**

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the April 14th, 2010, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:32 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planning; Paul Benning (Proxy for Stacey Hanson), NDDOT-Bismarck (Via Conference Call); Ryan Brooks (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planning; Dustin Lang, NDDOT-Grand Forks District; Dean Rau, Grand Forks City Engineering; Joe McKinnon, MNDOT Planning-Bemidji; Richard Onstad, Grand Forks County Engineer; and Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit.

Guests present were: Sara Aultman, MNDOT-St. Paul; and Kent Leben, NDDOT- Bismarck and Stephanie Hickman, FHWA-ND (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 MARCH 10TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY ONSTAD, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 10TH,
2010, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Haugen referred to the staff report included in the packets, and pointed out that it identifies that we are approving the Draft 2011-2014 Minnesota T.I.P. today, however, because North Dakota did not have a Draft T.I.P. prepared we will be approving theirs in May.

Haugen commented that he does have a couple of updates concerning the proposed T.I.P., the first being that the Grand Forks Airport has still not yet received confirmation on funding for the Airport Road reconstruction project, so that project is not ready to be amendment into our current T.I.P.; and, as most of your are already aware, the second stimulus has not been passed by Congress yet, so any action on projects relying on stimulus funds are on hold as well.

Haugen stated, however, that we do have to take action on the Draft Minnesota T.I.P. today. He explained that staff did work closely with the District Office, and the ATP to ensure that the projects we have listed in our T.I.P. are consistent with those listed in the S.T.I.P., and a public hearing notice was published indicating that a public hearing would be held at today's meeting. He added that the notice also identified that written comments could be submitted until noon today, none were received. He opened the public hearing. There was no one present for discussion so the public hearing was closed.

Haugen referred to the project tables, and pointed out that there are a total of 22 projects programmed on the Minnesota Side between 2011 and 2014, as well as one illustrative project for a new street connecting to the sugar beet plant from the north, for which the City of East Grand Forks has requested an earmark. He stated that approximately \$13,700,000 worth of work will be accomplished during this four year period.

Haugen reported that in the past our draft documents have included only a basic resolution identifying that it is an approval of the draft document, a short introduction, and the project listings themselves; and then when we get to the final document we include more appendices, more descriptions of the funding sources, and other information; therefore, at this time our draft only shows the individual projects prioritized by year, and their funding sources.

Rau referred to the project tables, and stated that he did find a few errors that need to be addressed: 1) There is no Project 9 listed – it jumps from Project 8 to Project 10; 2) Project description for Project 17 states: “Construct a multi-purpose rail...” – should state: “Construct a multi-purpose trail...”; 3) Project description for Project 21 states: “Projects begins...” – should state: “Project begins...”.

Ellis pointed out that the project description for Project 8 states: “Inslattation of...” – should state: “Installation of...” instead.

McKinnon pointed out that the remarks section for Project 21 states that it will be constructed in 2012 but payment will be in 2013. He said that that should actually state that the project will be constructed in 2013 but payment will be in 2014 instead.

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MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY RAU, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE MINNESOTA SIDE OF THE DRAFT 2011-2014 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO CHANGES AS DISCUSSED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Haugen reported that, as the staff report indicated, the MPO received a request from the City of Grand Forks to amend the functional classification map. He said that as a result of that request, some additional items needing to be addressed for both North Dakota and Minnesota, were discovered as well.

Haugen referred to a power point slide presentation, and went over it (a copy of which is included in the file, and available upon request).

Presentation ensued, with Mr. Haugen giving a brief history on the development of Functional Classification.

Haugen stated that on the North Dakota side, a request was made to add 20th Avenue South and South 48th Street, both of which will be constructed by the end of 2011, and both of which will receive federal aid. He added that South 48th Street has been a future functionally classified street for some time, however 20th Avenue South has not, and will be a new addition to the system.

Haugen reported that while looking into this request staff noted some other issues with the functional classification map that need to be addressed. He explained that our ramp systems are not classified; that there are some non-existing streets being shown as existing classified streets; and some inconsistencies between what the State has mapped and what we have mapped.

Haugen referred to a slide of the 2006 Functional Classification Map for Grand Forks, and explained that back in 2003, when the update was performed, signatures for the MPO, Federal Highway, and the NDDOT were added to ensure that all three entities were using the most up-to-date map, and were consistent with our functional class system. He stated, however, that in looking at the map on the NDDOT website, you will notice that their freeway ramps are classified, as are the ramps on the DeMers overpass, where on ours they are not. He added that the only ramps that we are consistent on are those on Columbia Road, which are not classified on either map.

Haugen referred to slides illustrating the various inconsistencies between NDDOT's map, Grand Forks County's map, and ours, and went over them briefly.

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Haugen commented that they found an inconsistency between the NDDOT map and ours along North 81 as well. He stated that a possible reason for this is that, although the maps are consistent in terms of the urban aid boundary, the graphic in the center shows that back in 2002 the urban aid boundary was reduced along Highway 81, from a mile north to 27th Avenue. He said that they will look into this more during the next month to determine which map is the more accurate. He reported that he also met with Richard Onstad yesterday to make sure that we understand what the County has classified, and did find some inconsistencies there as well, so we will continue to work on this to ensure that all these inconsistencies are addressed.

Haugen reported that one of the results of updating the functional classification map is that we will also need to look at our urban roads map to ensure it is consistent with the functional classification map as well. He reported that there are some areas that do need to be updated, including the addition of South 48th Street and 20th Avenue South, the ramps on Columbia Road and the DeMers Overpass, a short segment of roadway that is not already classified on 27th Avenue North, etc.. He commented that urban roads would be North Dakota's identification for federal aid eligibility.

Haugen stated that down in the southern portion of Grand Forks, the urban aid boundary is the very southern line on the map, and it shows that the roadways in that area are eligible for the Federal Urban Road Program, however, Belmont Road, as it extends south, is not, which is one of the quirky areas that isn't in the city limits, that it is a county highway, but it is inside the urban aid boundary so it doesn't show up in the County's Major Collector System. He added that another roadway that is in a similar situation is DeMers Avenue from 55th to 69th as well.

Haugen reported that on the Minnesota side, again, we began the process of updating the functional classification system in 2003 and submitted our information to MNDOT at that time, however they wanted to delay taking action until they were able to complete a statewide update in 2005. He said that we just received notification from MNDOT that they received approval from Federal Highway in March 2010. He commented that he then went on-line to see what they were showing for their functional classification system, and did find some inconsistencies that will need to be resolved. He stated that Teri has already had some conversations with Theresa Chapman about this issue.

Haugen stated that we will continue to work with the appropriate staff from both sides of the river throughout the remainder of April so that we can have something available for approval from the MPO Executive Policy Board at their May meeting.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON RAILROAD CROSSING STUDY

Haugen reported that, as you are aware, we have three different components to this study. He pointed out that he did include some meeting summaries in the packets, including some committee meetings and public input meetings that were held on various portions of the study.

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Haugen stated that the first portion focused on the Bacon Road Closure issue; the second on the State Mill Spur; and the third on the Quiet Zone.

Haugen commented that there really isn't much information included concerning the quiet zone issue. He explained that they still have an issue with BNSF concerning the cost of upgrading the three crossings out by the Amtrak Station on DeMers Avenue, west of the interstate and 55th Street. He said that we were first under the impression that we needed to install a constant warning time signal at each of the three crossing to make them eligible for quiet zone status, but BNSF then told us that we needed complete upgrades at all three crossings, increasing our cost from \$30,000 to close to \$150,000 per crossing. He stated that they have been working with the Federal Railroad, and they have agreed to meet with BNSF and us out at the three crossings to do a field review to see what shape the existing equipment really is in.

Brooks asked if Federal Railroad has the final say on whether or not the additional upgrades are necessary. Haugen responded that they so have final say on whether or not these additional upgrades are "reasonable" or not.

Haugen reported that in terms of the Bacon Road Closure portion of the study, one of the big issues that we have been dealing with involves the possibility of the State Mill using a Unit Train.

Haugen referred to the packet, and pointed out that he did include a summary from a meeting held with stakeholders, business owners, property owners, representatives from the State Mill, emergency responders, representatives from BNSF, MPO staff, City staff, and staff from the consulting firm, SRF.

Haugen reported that discussion was held at that meeting to try to determine how a unit train would be able to be accommodated on the State Mill property. He stated that as a result of that discussion, two items of importance were brought to light; one was the fact that we need to use an estimated length of 7,000 feet when talking about a unit train, and the second was that we need to have 8,000 linear feet of track available on site to accommodate a unit train as well, therefore the State Mill, and BNSF have to try to figure out if there is room for an 8,000 foot long pad on site to accomplish this, and it didn't appear that BNSF was very confident that they could provide this much track on site.

Haugen stated that one major question coming out of this discussion was how will all the State Mill Spur crossings be impacted if the State Mill does begin using Unit Trains. He referred to the last memorandum included in the packet, and went over the information briefly.

Haugen reported that he also included summaries from the neighborhood meetings we had on the State Mill Spur portion of the study. He stated that the stakeholders didn't seem to have too much of a concern with the plans we have for each of the crossings along the spur, with the exception of the area at 4th Avenue, between University Avenue and 4th Street. He explained that there is also an alley crossing in that area as well, and we established that that is also a public crossing and thus needs to be treated as we would a street crossing in order to improve safety.

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He said that they had initially thought they would like to close the 4th Avenue North crossings, but keep the alley entrance open, but the business owner, Dick Walsh Construction, expressed his wishes that they both remain open, but if either were closed he would prefer that it be the alley crossing instead. He stated that they would show the two alternatives, closing the 4th Avenue crossing and keeping the alley crossing open, and closing the alley crossing and keeping the 4th Avenue crossing open, at the next meeting for discussion.

Haugen commented that this is basically the status of the Railroad Crossing Study. He explained that in terms of the quiet zone portion they are waiting to hear the results of the BNSF/Federal Railroad meeting in May; and in terms of the Bacon Road Closure portion they are waiting to hear from BNSF as to whether or not they can accommodate a Unit Train. He stated that one other thing was that they had initially thought that the 27th Avenue North crossing could remain open, but 8,000 feet would take us past 27th Avenue North, so it would have to close as well. He added that the State Mill Spur portion of the study is really contingent on whether or not the State Mill begins using Unit Trains or not.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Livability/Sustainability Document Distributed

Hickman reported that she just wanted to let everyone know that there is a document out there about livability and sustainability, which lists most of the programs available. She stated that this is a DOT/HUD/ETA partnership, and includes several of the different funding programs and grants available from all three agencies.

Hickman commented that there is a very big interest from the national level in livability/sustainability, and this document is just a list of the programs that would be eligible for those kinds of activities.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY BROOKS, SECONDED BY MCKINNON, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 14TH,
2010, MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:07 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Office Manager