

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

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the July 14th, 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 (Via Conference Call); Denny Johnson, NDDOT/Transit Division-Bismarck (Via Conference Call); Charles Durrenberger (Proxy for Brad Gengler), Grand Forks Planning; Dustin Lang, NDDOT-Grand Forks District; Dean Rau, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer; Greg Boppre, EGF Consulting Engineer; and Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit.

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.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 9TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lang referred to Page 6 of the minutes, and reported that when he talked about Item #6, US 2 to Arvilla, he did not know when bidding would be taking place, however, he has since been informed that it will occur on July 30th.

MOVED BY BOPPRE, SECONDED BY LANG, TO APPROVE THE JUNE 9TH, 2010, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS SUBMITTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Haugen referred to the staff report, included in the packets, and pointed out that it indicates that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed back in 1997 per ISTEA's requirement that a written agreement be made between the State DOT's, the Transit Operator, and the MPO. He explained

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that since the agreement was signed in 1997, there have been two reauthorizations and one CFR change, and as a result of both the Transit Operator's and the MPO's Tri-Annual Reviews, we were informed that the MOU needed to be updated. He stated that it took several months for all parties to reach an agreement on the language, but it was finally accomplished, and a copy of the document was included in the packets.

Haugen reported that this updated MOU was presented to the respective boards and agencies, and was approved by the East Grand Forks City Council at their meeting last week, and the Grand Forks' Safety Committee last evening. He stated that it will be presented to the Grand Forks City Council next week, and there is no indication that they wouldn't approve it, therefore staff would request this body forwards a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board so that they can approve it at their meeting next week as well, after which staff can then present it to both DOT's for their signatures. He added that there is an August 12th deadline for getting this document signed.

MOVED BY DURRENBERGER, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, AND FORWARD IT TO BOTH STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION FOR SIGNATURES.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF UPDATE TO NORTH DAKOTA URBAN ROADS MAP

Haugen reported that last month discussion was held on the proposed changes to the North Dakota Urban Roads map, and he has not received any further comments on those changes.

Haugen stated that he included a copy of a map in the packets that highlights the proposed changes. He referred to the map, and to a power-point slide show, and went over the proposed changes briefly.

Durrenberger asked what is proposed on the Columbia Road Overpass. Haugen responded that the overpass itself remains the same, but the ramps will be added as regional secondary roadways. Lang asked if that was the same at DeMers. Haugen responded it was.

Ellis asked about 20th and South Belmont, and whether or not they should be shown with dotted green lines. Haugen responded that they will be shown with a solid green line. Ellis stated that they look black. Haugen agreed that they are currently shown in black, as he is just highlighting those segments that will be changed. Ellis asked if they aren't proposed roads. Haugen responded that they are existing roads, and those roads shown with dotted green lines are proposed roadways, not existing roadways. Rau explained that they are looking at getting 20th classified as a collector. Ellis responded she knows that, and that that is the same with Belmont, but she was confused in that some are dotted as proposed, and some aren't. Rau stated that roads

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such as 48th, which is shown in dotted green, are not in yet, but are being proposed to be constructed as a collector roadway.

Rau asked Ms. Hanson if NDDOT had received any communication concerning functional classification changes. Hanson responded that they have not heard anything on functional classification from Federal Highway at this time, and she did check with them last week, but they hope to have something soon.

MOVED BY RAU, SECONDED BY DURRENBERGER, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NORTH DAKOTA URBAN ROADS MAP FOR STREETS INSIDE THE FEDERAL URBAN AID BOUNDARY.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON T.I.P. SELECTION PROCESS 12-15

Haugen reported that as they have gone through the T.I.P. Selection Process update there have been several requests for us to document what the new process will entail, which is what this procedural manual is intended to do.

Haugen commented that the manual tries to identify basic schedules/timelines, as well as the various requirements we have to follow out of the CFR. He added that it also highlights the financial plan, and what is required as part of the financial planning documents.

Haugen referred to Page 46 of the packet, and pointed out that this is the North Dakota Federal Aid Program Responsibility Matrix, which, unfortunately did not copy well. He explained that this is something that the MPO's and the NDDOT have been working on to help identify all the different federal programs and funding splits; how we determine the initial cost estimates; how we go through the prioritization process; how we determine whom, within the DOT Divisions, have the primary responsibility for the program; and which federal agency is in charge, Federal Highway or Federal Transit.

Durrenberger asked if public hearings are required for this. Haugen responded that he does not think they are required to hold public hearings on this.

Haugen referred to Page 48, and commented that this is something to highlight: "Regionally Significant Projects Regardless Of Funding Source". He stated that this is something that is coming back into our T.I.P. document. He explained that what this means is that if there are projects, particularly those that are occurring on our functionally classified roadway system, that are not utilizing FHWA type funds, they still should be showing up in our T.I.P. document.

Haugen referred to Page 62, and pointed out that it gives us further clarification on what is considered a T.I.P. amendment and what is considered a T.I.P. modification to projects.

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Rau referred to Pages 70 to 73, which lists the timelines for both North Dakota and Minnesota, and asked if we also had the new timelines for the Minnesota side as well. Haugen responded that they don't, however there shouldn't be many major changes from the current timeline.

Haugen stated that they hope to be able to submit this document for approval at the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON RAILROAD CROSSING STUDIES

Haugen referred to the staff report, and went over it briefly:

1. Bacon Road Closure Study: Haugen reported that the City of Grand Forks received a request from BNSF and the North Dakota State Mill to consider the complete closure of the Bacon Road Railroad Crossing. He stated that as part of our Scope of Work, we indicated that BNSF and the State Mill are funding 100% of the cost involved for this portion of the Railroad Crossing Study, so we agreed that we would look at all alternatives, not just the closure of the crossing.

Haugen stated that the predication of this request is based on the issue of a 250-foot clearance requirement on either side of the crossing to ensure that no railroad cars can be stacked. He said that we had gotten quite a ways into the study when we were asked how a variance from that requirement could be requested, so we began looking into the regulation and found that it is based on a Federal Highway Guideline as the Federal Railroad Agency does not have such a regulation. He stated that BNSF has said that they may have an internal regulation that states this, but they have not been able to produce a document substantiating it, therefore we are still trying to establish the actual requirement for sight distance.

Haugen commented that they have come up with four alternatives:

- a. Do nothing, leave as is.
- b. Close Bacon Road at an estimated cost of \$30,000.
- c. Make it a private crossing, which could reduce the 250-foot clearance requirement, however, if the 250-feet is a safety requirement, that should be considered even if it is a private crossing. Haugen stated that many of the adjacent property owners were nervous about this crossing being made private, as they would have less rights to cross there.
- d. If close Bacon Road, establish an alternative route. Haugen commented that they looked at 27th Avenue North as a possible alternative route, but in 2002 or 2003 the City of Grand Forks signed it closed due to the condition of the coulee bridge, and the cost estimate to make the necessary improvements to make it a viable alternative is \$2,000,000.

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Durrenberger asked, if this crossing were made private, would it be possible to maybe have manual arms that could come down when cars are in there. He added that he would suspect that something like that wouldn't be allowed if it were kept public. Haugen responded that its true that it wouldn't be allowed if it were kept public, but, yes, the Mill could have more control over when and who would be crossing it, but a lot of the adjacent property owners have trust issues with both the Mill and the Railroad, so they immediately felt that it would only be open for them to use for a year or two, and then completely shut-off from them. He added that part of the sentiment, if you will recall, a few years back there used to be a crossing back by Home of Economy, and that just got closed without much fanfare by both the Mill and the Railroad, so they fear the same thing would happen here.

Haugen said that they presented the four alternatives, and our study is now at the point where we need to know if there really is a 250-foot clearance requirement, or if it is based solely off the guideline.

- 2) Mill Spur Study: Haugen reported that a draft report is available on the MPO website. He stated that staff held final open houses and neighborhood committee meetings.

Haugen said that he included updated maps reflecting updates based on the input they received. He pointed out that that two biggest challenges are reflected on Figure 7, and involve modifications that were necessary to provide better safety, and to allow for a possible future quiet zone , by relocating a driveway at the 8th Avenue North crossing that will allow enough turning radii for an occasional larger size semi-trailer truck. He stated that this does not impact the cost much but does introduce some limitations to parking on 7th Street.

Haugen commented that another challenge is reflected on Figure 9, and involves Gateway Drive. He explained they attempted to try to convey how the construction of a median, located on the westerly side of the railroad crossing on Gateway Drive, would entail and impact the lanes that are currently existing out on Gateway Drive. He stated that SRF inserted a cross-section on the map that illustrates this, however the Grand Forks Engineering Department pointed out that it probably doesn't match what they graphically show occurring on the photo for that cross-section. He said that the main thing that would be occurring would be the removal of the island, and relocation of the traffic signal to allow for a railroad crossing gate system to be installed.

Haugen reported that they have not received any direct opposition to any of the closures, and, in-fact, at the public input meetings they had residents who live on some of the avenues we are suggesting be closed who have stated they are in

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favor of the closures. He added that most of the businesses they visited with are also in favor of the closures as well.

Haugen referred to the last page of the packet, and pointed out that it is the preferred improvement cost estimates. He stated that the bulk of the cost is at the actual crossings themselves, where the minimum requirements to establish a quiet zone are flashing lights, gates, power out indicator lights, and constant warning times.

Haugen stated that they are recommending three of the crossings, so the remaining seven crossings would need roughly about \$350,000 invested in each of them to bring them to quiet zone status.

Haugen commented that the reason why they have these cost estimates, and all the different columns, was to identify all the different funding sources that would implement many of those different recommendations, so all the costs could come entirely from one program, or there are five different programs that could participate in the columns. He added, however, that the \$45,000 for closure would come entirely from BNSF and a program the NDDOT has that is used toward contributing to closure costs, so there would be very little city monies used for closures.

- 3) Quiet Zone Study: Haugen reported that they are still waiting for the FRA report regarding the three crossings out by the Amtrak Depot on 55th Street North. He stated that they did hear that, because each of these crossings are technically on a different subdivision of the railroad line, each of them would be their one separate crossing zone, and would each need to submit their own application.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY LANG, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 14TH, 2010,
MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 1:08 P.M.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Office Manager