

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE  
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – 12:00 Noon  
Grand Forks County Commissioners Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Gary Malm, Chairman, called the June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:00 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Gary Malm, Steve Adams, Warren Strandell, Dick Grassel, Mike Powers, and Greg Leigh.

Absent were: Art Bakken and Doug Christensen.

Guest(s) present were: Dean Rau, Assistant Grand Forks City Engineer.

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

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Chairman Malm declared a quorum was present.

**PRESENTATION OF LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR ART BAKKEN**

Malm said that he has a letter of appreciation he intended to present to Art Bakken, however, since Mr. Bakken is not here today it will be mailed to him.

**APPROVAL OF THE MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2010, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***CHAIRMAN MALM ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS TO THE MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2010, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD. HEARING NONE, CHAIRMAN MALM DECLARED THE MINUTES APPROVED, AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

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**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2010-2013 T.I.P.**

Haugen reported that this agenda item is amending the current T.I.P. document to account for some FTA funds that were already awarded to the Cities Area Transit. He stated that they had previously been awarded about \$1,000,000, and had programmed some improvements to their bus barn already, and they have good bids, so they are now requesting the ability to use the remaining dollars, thus the need to amend the 2010-2013 T.I.P. to reflect those additional projects.

Haugen referred to the staff report, included in the packet, and pointed out that the Cities Area Transit is proposing to add the following projects using FTA 5309 funds totaling \$286,000. The projects include:

1. \$230,000 to install some basic Automatic Vehicle Location devices on our buses and paratransit vehicles.
2. \$18,000 to fill-in a pit at the bus barn.
3. \$38,000 to purchase two non-revenue service vehicles.

Haugen stated that a public hearing was held at the Technical Advisory Committee last Wednesday, and no comments were received from the public, so we are recommending approval of this T.I.P. amendment.

Leigh asked they used the pit that is being filled in at the bus barn for. Haugen responded that they used it to service the vehicles. Leigh asked who services the vehicles now. Haugen responded that they still service the vehicles there, but that they had two pits, and only need one, so they want to fill one of them in.

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY ADAMS TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE 2010-2013 T.I.P., AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO DRAFT MINNESOTA 2011-2014 T.I.P.**

Ellis reported that we have been fortunate enough in East Grand Forks to be awarded Transportation Enhancement dollars for 2011, 2012, and 2013, for three different projects. She explained, however, that the 2011 project is a continued bikepath that would run on, or along the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. off-ramp, go along 8<sup>th</sup>, and connect over to where the trailhead is to close the connection, however in order for this project to be done we would need to do the full-intersection at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.W. project first, and at this time that project has been slated for the 2014 City Sub-Target, and may actually be moved back even further, or not done at all. She stated, then,

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that in order for us to ensure we don't lose the 2011 transportation enhancement dollars, we are requesting we be able to move the 2012 project to 2011, and the 2011 project to 2012. She explained that the 2012 project involves the continuation of sidewalks along DeMers Avenue from where the Merit Care Pracs building is across Gateway Drive in order to make improvements for pedestrians and to finish off the sidewalks on the Burger King side up to 14<sup>th</sup>.

Grassel asked where the sidewalks would be located on the McDonald's side of the street. Ellis responded that they would be located on the berm if MNDOT agrees, or they will need to be extended into the frontage road. Leigh asked if she meant they would be located on the median. Ellis responded that they would be placed where the curb is at this time, which would mean decreasing the size of the frontage road by four or five feet. Grassel asked if they would be striping it. Ellis responded that it would not, that it would be an actual sidewalk, so they would be adding sidewalk, and then putting in a new curb, unless they get permission from the landowners to put the sidewalk on their property.

Ellis reported that on the west side of the street there is already sidewalk there, so the sidewalk could actually lead on the frontage road, heading east/west towards 5<sup>th</sup> rather than heading north/south up to 14<sup>th</sup>, so it would go across to the Top Quality lot, and then head east/west along there. She added that we already have right-of-way there so there wouldn't be any additional costs for that.

***MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY STRANDELL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO THE DRAFT MINNESOTA 2011-2014 T.I.P., AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

Strandell asked if this doesn't have to be approved by the Area Transportation Partnership. Ellis responded it does. She added that now that the T.I.P. has been amended to include it, it will need to be submitted to the ATP for their approval as well. Strandell asked if there would be any issues with the City coming up with the local share for this because they have had a couple of instances where that was the case. Ellis responded that as far as she knows there shouldn't be any problem with their getting the local share from the City, adding that she has talked to Scott Huizanga, the City Administrator, about this project.

Ellis reported that she is also planning on meeting with the MNDOT District Engineer, the Traffic Engineer, and the MNDOT MPO Planner, to discuss the fact that MNDOT has made a pledge to follow an ADA transition plan, and make improvements, and the intersection at Central and Gateway does not meet ADA standards, so if they are looking at project to do for ADA funds, they may look at doing that intersection in 2011, concurrent with our sidewalks, and may pay for that intersection.

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

Haugen reported that, although we finally have a Draft 2011-2014 T.I.P. for North Dakota, there are still some programs that we have not been notified of any funding being awarded, but it is a draft and we still have a couple of months to produce the final document.

Haugen stated that there were some extensive revisions to the draft, which was put out in the public notice, and at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting last week, we extended the public comment period until noon today. He said, however, that in both cases no public comments were received. He explained that the reason for their extending the public comment period was due to all the changes that were noted between the draft that we presented for public comment, and the changes that occurred at the Technical Advisory Committee, therefore we decided to extend the public comment period an additional week, but, again, we received no comments.

Haugen reported that, rather than going through all of the projects, he will just highlight a few things of importance:

1. Page 36 – At the bottom right corner, it shows that we have a total of \$45,000,000 in projects, but when you look at the individual years it shows that we have a rough average of about \$12,000,000 per year. Of that \$12,000,000 each year, \$2,500,000 is generally for transit operations and capital projects, with the remaining, almost \$10,000,000, is for street and road improvements.

Grassel asked if the reconstruction of the Minnesota/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor was included. Haugen responded it was not at this time. Malm asked why it wasn't included. Haugen responded that the City of Grand Forks has not forwarded it to the MPO as a priority project. Malm asked where the City is on this issue today. Rau responded that he isn't sure when they are actually looking at maybe doing that corridor, but it most likely won't be until somewhere in the 2014-2015 range.

Grassel commented that that means this project has been waiting for twenty years. He said that he doesn't mean to sound critical, but he knows that conversations regarding that project started back in 1994. Rau stated that they are currently waiting for a final ruling from the National Historical Society on the removal of the granitoid. Grassel said that he knows that there are quonsets full of that stuff, so he doesn't understand what the issue is. Malm added that he thought that an agreement had been reached concerning the granitoid issue. Haugen responded that the State Historical Society came to an agreement, but they then forwarded the issue to the National Historical Society for their approval as well.

Haugen reported that the agreement that we have would require that we keep essentially one block of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue granitoid as part of the designated historic pavement area. Powers asked why they wouldn't want to preserve the granitoid on a side street instead. Haugen responded

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that they are preserving the granitoid on some of the sidestreets as well, but they are decommissioning a significant amount of granitoid. He stated that he would forward the board the map that shows what is going to remain, and what is going to be deregistered.

Leigh asked why the City of Grand Forks can't dictate how they want their own streets. He pointed out that there is granitoid just to the north of Minnesota/4<sup>th</sup>. He asked why they couldn't just designate that neighborhood as a historic site, and then redo the main artery. Haugen responded that the short answer is the red tape of bureaucracy, and the long answer is that the study we produced eighteen months ago still provides a good basis as to how that project could proceed, so it does show that even if one block remains on the register, we do have a study, and we do have the basic agreements in place to allow us to go in and reconstruct that corridor, so by having one block left remaining, it does not prohibit the rest of the corridor being reconstructed.

2. Page 28 – Project #13: With the DeMers Overpass being redone last summer, there has been a desire by both the City and the District Office to clean up either side to the east and west of the overpass. This project has been termed “pending” or “illustrative” waiting for a federal finance resource to be committed to it. In this document, the State is committing dollars to that project, so the good news is it is no longer in limbo, it is now actually being programmed to occur in 2011. This project will be improving DeMers Avenue, both east and west of the overpass structure. Grassel asked how much area would be included in this from the overpass going west, will it go to the fire station. Haugen responded it would. Grassel asked how much area would be included to the north. Haugen responded that it won't go very far north, but will come on the east side of the overpass to where we had the US 2 microsufacing done. He added that another part of this job will be to some work on the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue ramps leading to the overpass structure.

Leigh referred to Project #9, and asked what Dynamic Messaging Signs are. Haugen responded that it is another term for variable message signs. He explained that these are the digital reader boards you see along roadways that give various types of transportation messages such as road closure information, etc.. Leigh asked how we can get one for people coming into East Grand Forks. Haugen responded that we do have an ITS plan that identifies a few locations, so, like everything else, we are working with the District Office to get it prioritized. He added that up until a few weeks ago we didn't know we would be getting any in North Dakota, and now it will happen in 2011, and then in 2012 there is a follow up project that will put one out on US #2, west of town.

3. Page 38 – Because that section of DeMers Avenue now has a committed funding source, there are not illustrative projects listed.

Malm referred to Page 25, and asked what a Demand Response Vehicle is. Haugen responded that they are the Dial-A-Ride or Senior Rider Program vehicles.

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Powers referred to Project #5, the remark section which states “this request is in anticipation of a solicitation for New Freedom urban transit funds”, and asked what New Freedom is. Haugen responded that it is a federal transit program, whose funding is for a specific population group, the disabled or elderly.

***MOVED BY LEIGH, SECONDED BY ADAMS TO APPROVE THE DRAFT NORTH DAKOTA 2011-2014 T.I.P., AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP FOR EAST GRAND FORKS**

Haugen reported that in the past couple of months staff has been communicating that we will be presenting a functional classification map for our Minnesota side, and that is what we are doing today.

Haugen distributed an updated copy of the Draft Functional Classification Map for East Grand Forks, and explained that the area highlighted in blue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W., is the one significant change between this map and the map that was included in the packet. He stated that they had been proposing that 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W. be made a principle arterial, but MNDOT would not support that at this time, so it is being maintained in it’s current status as a collector roadway.

Haugen said that, with that highlighted change, both the Technical Advisory Committee, and staff would recommend approval of the Draft Functional Classification Map For East Grand Forks.

Grassel asked why MNDOT would not classify 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W. as a principle arterial. Haugen responded that they agreed that as traffic increases on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W. it would warrant an upgrade to a principle arterial, however at this time they just didn’t see the necessary traffic volumes to warrant that at this time. Leigh asked if there would be a difference in funding if it were a principle arterial versus it being a collector. Haugen responded that it would not. He explained that having it functionally classified is the basic eligibility for federal aid, and that is what we are achieving with this map by getting these roadways functionally classified to become eligible for federal aid, among other reasons as well.

Powers asked if this could change if we did a traffic study. Haugen responded it could. He added that one of the anticipated outcomes of the 2010 Census is that, currently 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W. is the boundary of the Urbanized Area for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, and with the 2010 Census, and since the City has already annexed and incorporated land north of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street N.W., that would be one additional reason to revisit the functional classification of this area.

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Haugen reported that one other thing is that one of the obstacles we were having with functional classification, if you will recall, is that we have been working for quite some time on getting our digital files reconciled with Minnesota's digital files, so we are now able to show roadways where they are supposed to be showing. He added that we were also able to get Bygland Road and part of U.S. Business 2 to maintain a principle arterial status.

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY GRASSEL TO APPROVE THE DRAFT  
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP FOR EAST GRAND FORKS, AS SUBMITTED.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

**MATTER OF CHANGES TO T.I.P. PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

Ellis reported that they have been working on the NDDOT side, along with Federal Highway and the three MPOs, to come up with a better process in terms of T.I.P./S.T.I.P. development and how we select and prioritize projects for inclusion in our T.I.P.. She stated that they are now beginning the process on the Minnesota side as well.

Ellis pointed out that, as it states in the staff report, project solicitation will be based on a Grand Forks/East Grand Forks MPO Application developed cooperatively through the metropolitan planning process, or by using an application that would meet the MPO planning process if it were developed by another agency, and that we would be able to take those projects, evaluate them through our Technical Advisory Committee, prioritize them here, at the Executive Board level through scoring worksheets that prove that they do meet our Long Range Transportation Plan, and that they meet the needs of our transportation planning process, and then we would put them in our T.I.P., after which the MPO would forward them to the State or to the ATP for inclusion in their A.T.I.P. or S.T.I.P.

Ellis reported that there are currently some funding programs that do not follow the plan as stated in the federal regulations, or in SAFETEA-LU as we are required to do, and so we are hoping to work with MNDOT, and the ATP to get them to follow the same process we are required to use. She referred to the list of projects, included in the packet and available upon request, and went over each briefly, explaining how each program's current process works, and how it should be.

Ellis commented that, ultimately, we would like to be a part of the process up-front rather than just accepting projects that are picked by other people.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY LEIGH, TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2010,  
MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:43 P.M.***

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Powers, Malm, Adams, Leigh, and Strandell..***

***Voting Nay: None.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,  
Office Manager