

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
OF THE GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, - 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Training Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Clarence Vetter, Chairman, called the December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:01 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Clarence Vetter, Mike Powers, Marc DeMers, Bob Rost, Al Grasser, Ken Vein (via conference call), Warren Strandell, and Jeannie Mock.

Guests(s) present were: David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Teri Kouba, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Office Manager.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Vetter declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2019, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY MOCK, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2019, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2019 HOLIDAY HOURS**

Haugen reported that just as the staff report states, this has been an annual opportunity of the MPO to provide it's employees to mirror what the City of Grand Forks does for it's employees, and our general practice is to follow the City of Grand Forks' Personnel Procedures, so we are seeking approval for these Holiday Bonus Hours.

***MOVED BY GRASSER, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE 2019 HOLIDAY HOURS, AS PRESENTED.***

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***  
***Voting Nay: None.***  
***Abstain: None.***  
***Absent: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2020 MPO OFFICE SPACE RENTAL CONTRACTS**

Haugen reported that we are on an annual renewal basis with our office space rental agreements so we are seeking approval to renew the leases. He pointed out that on the Grand Forks side the lease agreement itself is a continuation of our current lease with a cost increase using the price cost index escalator. He added that, as noted in the staff report for the City of Grand Forks' lease they have purchased the Herald building and there have been some discussion on the MPO moving over with their Community Development and Planning Departments when the space is ready for occupancy. He stated that the MPO Finance Committee reviewed that proposal over a year ago, and at that time they did feel that it made sense for the MPO to rent space in the building, it was just a question of how much space so that is still up in the air. He said that the latest information we have received is that the space in the Herald building would not be available to occupy until the first part of 2021, so sometime next summer there will be another discussion about the space needs for the MPO.

Haugen commented that on the East Grand Forks lease we are changing the space we are going to be occupying. He said that we formally had a satellite office at the other end of the building over by the Mayor's office and we are vacating that space. He explained that we were able to find some room to store a lot of our records so our current space that is being used for storage will be freed up and will allow us to move our furniture from the satellite office to our main office at the other end of the building, which we have been leasing for over a decade or so. He stated that the cost escalator used for the East Grand Forks lease is the same as what was used for the Grand Forks lease.

Haugen pointed out that copies of the agreements are included in the packet and staff is recommending we renew our leases with the changes discussed.

Vein commented that he understands the motion completely; it makes sense that we continue with what we've got. He added that the City of Grand Forks is just looking at hiring a construction manager to do the renovations and the scope hasn't yet been determined, so this is a very appropriate motion.

***MOVED BY DEMERS, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE RENEWING THE LEASE AGREEMENTS WITH THE CITIES OF GRAND FORKS AND EAST GRAND FORKS, AS PRESENTED.***

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***  
***Voting Nay: None.***  
***Abstain: None.***  
***Absent: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF GRAND FORKS DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY REPORT**

Haugen reported that over a year ago we engaged KLJ to assist us with analyzing the Downtown Parking for Grand Forks. He stated that we used a Steering Committee, and staff, that also assisted us through the process.

Haugen said that the work was in conjunction with the Grand Forks Downtown Action Plan Document, so the intent was that as the Downtown Action Plan identified more development and redevelopment potential that we would also look at what the parking situation would be with that development.

Haugen stated that the study report itself is in it's final form, and it was presented to the Grand Forks City Council early in December and last Wednesday the Technical Advisory Committee met and along with staff is recommending this body approve the document for the Grand Forks Downtown Parking Study.

Haugen commented that, as you noted in your packet there were short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations, and the City of Grand Forks is already starting to pursue some of the short-term recommendations.

***MOVED BY ROST, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE THE GRAND FORKS DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY REPORT, AS PRESENTED.***

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: None.***

**MATTER OF PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN/TITLE VI**

Haugen reported that last month you tabled this item and requested staff do some additional wordsmithing on a section of the document. He said that this has been done, and we included the full-draft of the Public Participation Plan in the staff report, and also identified, and as we discussed our Title VI document needed to be updated due to the NDDOT revising their document, so we noted in the staff report that that document is quite large and it repeats a lot of out other documents, and most is in template form so we provided you a link to that document rather than including the entire document in the packet, so he will focus on the Public Participation Plan itself, that was included in the staff report.

Haugen referred to the Public Participation Plan and pointed out that the main section that was part of the discussion was when the standards talk about our using innovative techniques. He stated that the way we wordsmithed it was to just try to keep it as generic as possible and not identify specific names, social media, and other things. He added that they also updated

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Appendix A, which was a series of techniques in the current document that MnDOT produced and utilized in their public participation, but they have updated their Appendix A into this more friendly format, and it talks about the latest techniques on the far left, including benefit challenges and some tips for success. He said that many of them we have employed throughout the years, but some we have not tried yet, but those are the two major changes or updates that we have done to the document since it was last before you.

Haugen commented that, Title VI, again, is pretty prescriptive of what it has to contain, how it is written, etc.. He said that one thing to note is that as part of this Title VI document we have to actually have to show a composition of staff by race, gender, etc., and we have to do this for the Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee as well.

Haugen stated that staff is recommending the board give preliminary approval to this family of documents. He said that, as we have noted and stated, under federal law this document, our Public Participation Plan, is required to have a 45-day notice and to be distributed to our partners for their review and comment on it, so if you give preliminary approval today that will begin the 45-day process so you won't see it again until February.

***MOVED BY GRASSER, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN/TITLE VI DOCUMENTS, AS PRESENTED.***

DeMers said that, obviously we are going through the prescribed standards and policies and procedures, but he is wondering if there is a gold standard of MPOs that are doing communications really well or is this something that everyone struggles with or is there something out there that we can look at beyond the standard this is what we try to do. Haugen responded that his response would be that the gold standards are probably specific to a study or a document. He added that most of this public participation is for the Title VI and is fairly prescribed and 90% of our participation is after the fact when something has gone through either City Council and/or Planning Commissions and then come to us for our review and comment, so the gold standard is usually specific to a document where the issue was such that that particular MPO emphasized the engagement process of that document. He added that we do have examples of those; in preparing the plan we have gathered the Public Participation Plans from our peer region, and also utilized our association with the American MPO Association to get some of their best examples. He said that a lot of those are not reflected in the plan document itself, it is more as a prescription of did we do our notices; it is more of the Appendix A part of it where we select a particular study, and which engagement tools will emphasis which participation.

DeMers stated that his follow up is, as we put an emphasis on communication and those types of things; and to your point, you are going to see this as part of our studies and our projects, so what do you anticipate the changes to the cost of these studies or projects will be. He added that if we are going to expect more engagement activities, that is time and management, so do we anticipate like a 10% increase to cost to studies. Haugen responded that he has two responses. He said that you will see this in the work program later on where we are adding a significant

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amount of money to our public participation line item; for each study, some of the decisions you have made in the past you have either executed addendums or add-ons to increase it or you decided you didn't want to do those activities, so it is really dependent on each individual study what we anticipate that participation will be. He cited the example of the Street and Highway Plan and explained that we actually had more than our typical public participation as a part of that process than we did for the Transit Development Plan.

DeMers said that the genesis of it is obviously the stuff that we've gone through discussing bridge stuff, which was a predecessor to a study, so obviously in our studies we can emphasis community outreach and those types of things, but we are finding that even before the study work we are hearing the accusation of being a little more opaque than we could be. He said that this is a tough problem and he is just looking to see what not only the cost will be moving forward but also if it will have the desired impacts we want to see.

Grasser said that a somewhat similar question came up at the Technical Advisory Committee level too; and his take on it was that he thinks most of them thought we do a pretty good job of communicating and identifying special groups and stakeholders and those kinds of things; but we may have to spend a little more time thinking about particularly when we do the long range transportation plan where there are conflict points that we probably need to recognize and to try to beef it up a little bit. He added that this particular document is a little more generic, but we may want to refine some of our thoughts in a little more detail because that was one of the criticisms that we received, but it is impossible to do enough to please everybody, but on some we may want to pay a little bit more attention on.

Vein stated that we did take criticism when we were talking about the bridge study and what he is gathering here is that this policy incorporates the flexibility that we would need to have to maybe address those on an individual and case-by-case project base; the question that he anticipates being asked with this new policy is how is it different than what we had before. Haugen responded that that isn't a current change in the actual Public Participation Plan process; if you will recall when they had us review an RFP that is sent out, in the scope of work there is a section there on public participation, so each one of those is catered a little bit to what we anticipate our need for public participation is for that individual product. He added that after we get the proposals and we select and negotiate the final scope of work and we review that final scope of work included in it is that public participation section of what the consultant will assist us with, so that hasn't changed, so what we are doing on a more global level is that we are updating our website to make it more user friendly and ADA compliant and we are continuing to work with on our relationship with our main Cities, Partners, and utilizing their resources for social media information output. He said that what we are starting to do is, both DOTs are starting to generate more statewide calendars of activities going on relating to transportation, so we are tapping into those resources as well.

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL AND PRIORITIZATION OF NORTH DAKOTA SIDE T.I.P. CANDIDATE PROJECTS**

Haugen reported that we have two programs that we are reviewing for candidate projects on the North Dakota side today; the first one is the H.S.I.P. or Highway Safety Improvement Program.

a) H.S.I.P.

Haugen reported that a couple of months ago we released a solicitation together with the NDDOT to amend the jurisdictions. He said that we did receive only one application from the City of Grand Forks to put right turn lanes in at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and South 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

Haugen said that they note that it is an eligible activity within our Transportation Plan, and we also note that it is not one of the identified priorities in either the Statewide Strategic Highway Plan or the Local Roads Improvement Safety Program.

Haugen commented that the cost is split 90/10, so of the roughly \$578,000 cost, \$520,000 would be federal funding.

Haugen stated that the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are identifying that it is consistent with our Metropolitan Transportation Plan and are suggesting that you approve it and give it priority status.

***MOVED BY ROST, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE THE H.S.I.P. CANDIDATE PROJECTS FOR THE FY2021-2024 T.I.P. AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND TO GIVE PRIORITY RANKING.***

DeMers asked when the project would be done. Haugen responded that it would be a 2024 award earlier. He said that if you would look back at all of the amendments in the T.I.P.s that we approved recently the H.S.I.P. projects have been moving from program year to program year depending upon when they fall within North Dakota's particular budget that year. He said that this was a solicitation for 2024, however if it does get selected it might be programmed earlier.

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: None.***

b) Transportation Alternatives

Haugen reported that, again, we solicited a couple of months ago and received one application from the City of Grand Forks. He stated that it is to convert a gravel multi-use trail out on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to a concrete surface.

Haugen commented that when we looked at this particular conversion in our transportation plan, the bike and ped section; we noticed that there are four existing trails that are gravel and that the document is silent on converting any of them over to a harder surface, so we are noting that we probably missed them with the development of that plan, so we are working to address how these might be looked at in the future, but we do note that it is consistent with the standards and objectives that we do have in our document even though it is not a specifically identified project, and both staff and the Technical Advisory Committee are recommending that it is consistent with our Metropolitan Transportation Plan and to give it a high priority ranking.

Haugen said that the cost will be an 80/20 split with an estimated cost of just over \$300,000; thus the federal amount will be just over \$240,000, and it involves only converting a segment of an existing gravel trail from gravel to concrete. DeMers said it would only be the south part, not going north. Haugen responded that that is correct.

***MOVED BY GRASSER, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE CANDIDATE PKROJECTS FOR THE FY2021-2024 T.I.P. AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH OUR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND GIVE IT PRORITIY RANKING.***

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: None.***

#### **MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2019 BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

Haugen reported that most years we don't make major budget adjustments during the year; the last time was probably 2013, but this year we had some unusual activities take place so we are needing to do some budget amendments prior to the year end. He referred to the packet and went over the amendments; explaining the need for each briefly.

Haugen commented that staff is recommending that the board approve these adjustments.

***MOVED BY MOCK, SECONDED BY ROST, TO APPROVE THE 2019 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS, AS PRESENTED.***

***Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: None.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT #1 TO WORK PROGRAM**

Haugen reported that we are operating under a two year work program; 2019 and 2020, and we established the FY2020 program about this time a year ago. He said that we have had discussion over this past year amending the work program to take primarily a new focus on a future river crossing study so this amendment is actually doing that, and setting up our 2020 work activities so we are amending out some of the things that we have been discussing that would be possible to change to allow for the future bridge traffic impact study.

Haugen commented that the budget did not change in 2020, we just shifted out focus to different areas.

Haugen said that there are two other things to note; our 2020 budget was previously focusing on a major effort to update both City's Land Use Plans, but both City Planning Departments have asked us to delay the start of that until the second half of the year. He explained that one of the reasons for that request is because they want to have the 2020 Census results timed better with the Land Use Plan update so we agreed to start that process later and carry it into 2021 to better time it with the census results to assist us in understanding the previous growth of the cities and how that might affect the future growth.

Haugen stated that the last thing is that we are zeroing out our equipment line item. He explained that because we don't know exactly how the Herald building will shake out for us, we are zeroing out our equipment budget for this year, and hopefully we will have a better sense of what our needs may or may not be when we develop our 2021-2022 Work Program.

Haugen explained that in the document itself we only included those sections where we have made some significant change. He added that the one thing that we didn't make a change to, but that is a requirement of our Feds, is the one that he is sure we are making progress each year towards and that is our new required Transportation Plan Update, so the table shown has not changed, and we are showing that we are still maintaining a schedule of compliance that is updated every five years.

Haugen stated that the last pages of the document contain the financials; again we did not increase or change the budget, we have just shifted within these line items some of the activities and zeroed out some and inserted the Future Bridge Feasibility Study line item.

Haugen commented that as we discussed earlier, we increased our Public Participation budget as well, as a reflection of our past discussions about beefing up our public participation.

Haugen stated that the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are seeing approval of Amendment #1 to our 2019-2020 Work Program.

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE AMENDMENT #1 TO THE 2019-2020 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM, AS PRESENTED.***



*Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Mock, Grasser, DeMers, Vein, Rost, and Strandell.*  
*Voting Nay: None.*  
*Abstain: None.*  
*Absent: None.*

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON U.S. 2/U.S.81 SKEWED INTERSECTION STUDY**

Kouba reported that we are now putting the draft document out for comments so we are updating everyone on it so we can get final comments or input from various entities, including the MPO Board.

Kouba stated that just as kind of a refresher; the project was just to identify issues and opportunities and assess alternatives. She said that one of the key issues is the skewed turning movements, especially at the intersection of Gateway and Washington, but there is another pretty good skew at the intersection of Gateway and Mill Road, plus the closeness between the intersections of Washington and 5<sup>th</sup> along Gateway as well. She added that this creates a lot of backup of vehicles at various times, especially when there is a train crossing there as well, and there is a lot of opportunities for rear-end crashes, so there are some safety issues there too.

Kouba commented that the traffic backup we are experiencing today is only going to increase in the future, and is one of the things that we, our model for autonomous, we have once again the train delays, and each car has ends up having about two and a half minutes of waiting, if not more when that train crosses, and multiply that by all the cars and we have a good seven or more hours of waiting. Rost asked if the rail is used twice, doesn't it come around the other side. Kouba responded that that is a suggestion as an alternative in this document, but there are still some things that need to be worked out between the Mill, the Railroad and the City as to who is going to be doing what and how it is going to be done, that is one of the things in the plan, as well as the possibility of the Unit Trains that are going to be coming through. She said that they haven't started yet, but at their Steering Committee meeting in November the Mill said that they haven't started yet but that they should be starting in January or February.

Powers stated, then, that the Unit Trains will be two to five times longer than the current trains. Kouba responded that when a Unit Train comes through the entire section shown on the map will be blocked by the train, because of its length. Powers asked how they can do that. Kouba responded that as long as they keep moving they can block the intersections as long as they want to. Powers said that he thought there was a limitation on how long you can block an intersection. Haugen responded that that is only a limitation if the train is completely stopped, and in this case it would be slowly proceeding through the intersections. Powers said though if it is a mile and a half long it is still closing the intersection. Haugen reiterated that the regulation is that if they don't stop it is allowable. He added that the Mill did add significant track to the north to allow for a Unit Train to completely get away from South of Gateway Drive. Kouba added that they will clear everything south of Gateway with the new track; and added that the unit trains are a concern as they will definitely add a lot more wait time for people in the future.

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Kouba commented that another issue is access management, as there are a lot of driveways along Gateway that have people stopping and starting and trying to turn. She said that when a business has more than one access along there the City has been trying to work with them to limit that, and if possible combine them.

Kouba stated that they did a traffic control analysis with existing conditions and future conditions because they were getting word that the NDDOT has been closing down or taking out a lot of traffic signals and doing an evaluation of the warrants so in this study we wanted to be able to give our engineering partners an idea of what might be happening if anything like this happens along Gateway Drive.

Kouba reported that the analysis found that the light at 20<sup>th</sup> and Gateway is not warranted with either existing or future conditions. She added that the signal at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Gateway, by Wilder School, is currently not warranted either, but there is a possibility that it may be in the future. She said that even though there is an underpass there it isn't always passable so a signal could still be warranted.

Powers said that the other day he was at the 20<sup>th</sup> and Gateway intersection and had to wait quite a while for the light to turn green to allow him to make a left turn, what will it be like trying to make a left turn with no signal. Kouba responded that the thought process is that the distance between the Columbia Road light and that intersection will give enough gaps for you to get through. Powers asked why would you take a light out that is by a school. Kouba responded that the City might be able to make a case to retain this signal because it is by a school. DeMers asked if the light isn't warranted, but there may be other traffic controls that are warranted there. Kouba responded that they certainly could do things like putting in a Hawk or something like that for when school is in session.

Kouba stated that they looked at the pedestrian network as well and there are light poles within the sidewalks that creates an issue for walkers, the trains cause crossing issues, there are very few pedestrian crossing heads at some of the intersections which makes crossing difficult all along the corridor, and there are several ADA conflicts throughout the study area and there is no minimal buffer to make people comfortable walking in the area.

Kouba commented that they also reviewed the bike network in the study area and found that there is a multi-use path north of Gateway that has some safety issues, which have been brought up as a concern especially crossing Mill Road and Washington.

Kouba said that these are some of the issues they found with the study and they are trying to come up with ways to make things safer, at the very least. She stated that they received feedback from their Steering Committee, and from the Public; they furnished worksheets to get some of the feedback on all of the alternatives that were proposed; they did some social media posts and placed information in the Grand Forks Herald as well as on the MPO website. She added that they sent out postcards both before and after the public meeting about all of the alternatives, so there was plenty of opportunities to give input and they gave their best efforts to try to get information out to the public as well.

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Kouba commented that some of the official feedback from the alternatives was to realign the Mill Spur so that it comes from the north instead. She said that one of the things that was pointed out at their last Steering Committee meeting was that we couldn't completely remove the section over Gateway because of accessibility to other business beside the State Mill so when they are moving the cars they are still going to have to come across Gateway but those would be shorter amounts of time and shorter trains, there won't be a unit train, to access those other business than the State Mill. She added that one of the reason why some of the other alternatives were eliminated.

Strandell asked if those unit trains were being assembled in Grand Forks or somewhere else; if they are being assembled in Grand Forks you would assume that they could move them in small pieces and then join them out of town somewhere before they take off. Haugen responded that they are coming in from out of town. Grasser added that they are coming in from out of town and when they get to the Mill he thinks they break them into three sections as they are loading and unloading and then they reassemble them, and reassembling them is a really big deal, very time consuming and very intensive to make sure everything is hooked up and running correctly.

Kouba commented that they came up with some key takeaways; because of the high density area it isn't a good idea fiscally to try to change those skews in the intersections, it is better to try to do some more impactful things like putting in medians to help guide traffic and those types of things. She stated that consolidating isn't accomplishing anything and we can't completely consolidate anyway because we can't completely take out that section over gateway anyway.

Kouba said that the highest ranking alternative is the realignment, many people like the idea that the train isn't coming through that neighborhood anymore, that became very high on the list of pros for this particular idea. She added that what is also nice about this is that you can take that realignment as Phase 2 and you can put in the Phase 1 of putting in all the safety measures and making sure that there is better distinguishing of lights between the traffic and the rail lights, put in ped heads, widening the sidewalks, bringing down the bicycle traffic to have a safer crossing along this area. She said that things like that, all of those can be done in the short-term to mid-term.

Kouba stated that they do have a cost estimate for this, but they don't have the details for some of the lower ones, but just for the realignment of the railroad itself the estimate is \$5.6 million, so the remainder of the total estimate of \$6.8 million would be for just those improvements along Gateway. She said that, just as a side note, they eliminated grade separation and the intersection consolidation alternatives as the cost and the impacts these would have made them undesirable.

Powers asked if the railroad is receptive of these suggestions, are they willing to provide any funding to help with the cost of the realignment. Kouba responded that unfortunately they have been pretty quiet about any of this, they don't offer either a positive or negative response to any of it, once the alternatives were presented they said they were no longer going to be involved in the project.

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Mock asked if there was any possibility of having the unit trains only come through town at night, or at least during off-peak hours and slower traffic times. Kouba responded that that has been suggested but, once again, basically, the Mill is kind of on the railroads time schedule so whether or not they are willing to do that is another issue. She said that that is where the negotiations and working with the railroad and the Mill is going to take a lot more time as opposed to just putting in some safety improvements along Gateway.

Kouba reported that, as noted in the staff report, we are working with the State, whether or not we are going to need to have to present this study to the NDDOT Management, and they are going to be updating the City Council in Grand Forks, and then we will be looking for final approval of the document.

DeMers asked if we know if the delays occur the same throughout the year or are there different seasons when they are higher or lower. Haugen responded that we do have, with the traffic video capture, we can establish the seasonality of our peak volumes, so generally we know that in April and in October we have our highest volume traffic experiences. He added that the current situation with the Mill Spur is that the Mill itself has a regular daily need for train service, and that will continue with the Unit Trains, so generally there are at least two trains a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so we know that with the higher volumes in April, with the same number of train traffic, we have longer delays occurring.

DeMers explained that what he is trying to get at is; he knows that at harvest time it will continue to generate a lot of traffic, but he knows that Grand Forks is just about done with DeMers Avenue upgrades, and he has heard from council members that they are trying to not have as much traffic through the downtown, but if you are going to have more congestion on Highway 2 to get to Crystal Sugar you are going to see more traffic pushed downtown. He said that the reason he made the comment “only \$6 million dollars”, to him he thought it would be a lot more, and he still thinks it might be, but to him it seems like it is just a protection against ruining what was done downtown, so he thinks that is the way to go.

Grasser commented that he is assuming that the initiating agency to do any further study or construction or programming of funds would be the NDDOT, correct. Kouba responded that she believes there is a City process that we can request, and a request from the DOT as well, because you have to work with BNSF as well as the Mill in order to make any changes to the Mill Spur. Haugen added that the MPO can take up a follow-up study if the preference is the realignment, and set up a similar study to look at the players as to what the realignment process would be, what funding opportunities might be available, etc.; or it could be part of a follow-up study by the NDDOT, particularly if they see the need for the project. He said that you notice that this is one of the highest crash locations in the Local Road Safety Improvement Program, so there is a benefit or a need to address crashes that occur on along this corridor, plus the fact that we have some warrants and we do have some program funds coming down the pike that we have to decide whether we will invest in these existing signals that aren't warranted or not, so there is some activity that will be happening soon on this corridor, and there should probably be some further discussion fairly quick on what should happen with the signals, the access points, and the railroad.

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Powers pointed out that the crashes that you alluded to earlier, it says on one page that they were rear ending crashes; how many crashes involved a train. Kouba responded that we haven't had any crashes since she believes the 1970s. Haugen added that there is no history of train crashing into vehicles, no fatalities.

DeMers asked about a roundabout option. Kouba responded that it actually does not improve anything, and actually increases traffic issues so it doesn't make sense to keep it as an alternative.

Vetter asked, when a train comes through it impacts traffic all the way from University Avenue all the way up, but on most of those side streets he thinks people can see the train and can reroute themselves and go someplace else, so has there been any thought with doing that for the Gateway one. He said that he knows that the new spur does go across Mill Road up towards the top where you could continue up Mill Road and then hook up on Washington, but he knows that that spur goes across on the northend of Mill Road, so is there still an alternative where we could reroute the traffic while the train is there, go up and come back down by Washington, has that been looked at at all. Kouba responded that that would be more of a technology thing, where that way people would know when the train is crossing so that they can reroute themselves, making sure to have that information at points where people can easily reroute themselves and at the northern part of Washington there aren't many places you can reroute yourself, but it definitely would help along Gateway. Vetter stated that he brings this up as he has been in line waiting for a train and has wondered why the people at the front of the line don't go north on Mill Road and come back down Washington, it is as easy as having someone from the Mill when the train is coming standing there and saying "go that way" and it would alleviate a lot of this traffic he would think, it is an education process but also could be something on the traffic signal that tells people that this is the direction of the traffic now. Kouba responded that they have technology out there now that they can tie to something like when the gates go down a sign will start flashing further down letting people know that there is a train on the track. She added that there is something like this on 42<sup>nd</sup> that lets people know that there is a train crossing at DeMers. Haugen added that there is no location on Gateway Drive that was part of the approval of the extension of the Mill Spur road that signifies that Bacon Road and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue North are occupied by trains, so that tells people on Gateway that those crossings are occupied, there is nothing that tells them that Gateway Drive is occupied and for how long it might be occupied, so that would be the simplest type of notification that is already installed for those two crossings north. He said that the report looked at that type of system, but doing it with dynamic message signs, and as soon as you start introducing dynamic message signing, the cost starts to escalate fairly high, but that would be something to further investigate with the railroad and with the NDDOT and the City as to whether that would be a short-term investment, because if your ultimate goal is to reroute the tracks, then you might not want to make that investment because it would be short lived.

Information only.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one present for comment.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

a. 2019 Annual Work Program Project Update

Vetter reported that this is our monthly progress report of all our pertinent studies and documents that we are preparing and their progress this past month.

b. Approval Of Bill/Check List For 11/16/19 TO 12/13/19 Period

***MOVED BY DEMERS, SECONDED BY ROST, TO APPROVE THE BILL/CHECK LIST FOR THE 11/16/19 TO 12/13/19 PERIOD.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

c. 2020 Transportation Funding Update

Haugen reported that Congress is acting on funding for transportation for all of 2020. He stated that at the end of the day on Friday the current continuing resolution expires, and it appears that Congress has reached a huge budget agreement and are working on funding all agencies for the full 2020 year, so as our 2020 Work Program starts it will relieve a little of our concern that there will be funding for the entire year rather than by continuous resolutions.

d. Rescission Elimination

Haugen reported that another significant thing that Congress did in their latest continuing resolution was to eliminate a rescission that was going to occur in the transportation budget in 2020 that could possibly have affected some of the projects we have in our T.I.P., so that risk is no longer as high as it was but Congress still has to pay for their appropriations somehow, so it isn't completely eliminated so there is still a slight risk.

e. 2020 Census

DeMers said that he talked to Mr. Haugen at our last meeting about the 2020 Census and he is wondering what is going to happen in the County, who is taking care of this. Haugen responded that because a lot of the players in the MPO study area are large religious institutions, social institutions, they will reach out into the counties so they will help get the word out to them; otherwise we have the efforts inside the metro area; then it will be a statewide effort for the counties, the rest of the rural areas would have their primary push from statewide efforts.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER  
18<sup>TH</sup>, 2019, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:06 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully Submitted,  
Peggy McNelis, Office Manager

**Grand Forks East Grand Forks MPO**  
**Transaction List by Vendor**  
 November 16 through December 13, 2019

Type	Date	Num	Memo	Account	Clr	Split	Amount
<b>AFLAC.</b>							
Liability Check	11/29/2019	AFLAC	501	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-826.47
<b>Alerus Financial</b>							
Liability Check	11/29/2019	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-8,469.18
Liability Check	12/13/2019	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-2,579.42
<b>Business Essentials</b>							
Bill	12/11/2019	Inv. #...	2020 Calenda...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-13.17
Bill	12/11/2019	Inv. #...	USB Extensio...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-40.88
Bill	12/11/2019	Inv. #...	Paper Clips	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-5.84
Bill Pmt -Check	12/11/2019	6843		104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-59.89
<b>CitiBusiness Card</b>							
Bill	11/29/2019	Acct #...	Charges For ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		-SPLIT-	-505.29
Bill Pmt -Check	11/29/2019	6838	Charges For ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-505.29
<b>City of Grand Forks</b>							
Bill	12/04/2019	Inv. #...	Copy Fees an...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-24.20
Bill Pmt -Check	12/04/2019	6842	Copy Fees an...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-24.20
<b>Earl Haugen</b>							
Bill	11/29/2019		Travel Reimb...	206 · Accounts Pay...		530 · Educatio...	-92.88
Bill Pmt -Check	11/29/2019	6839	Travel Reimb...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-92.88
<b>Forum Communications Company</b>							
Bill	12/11/2019	Inv. #...	Public Notice ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		555 · TIP	-188.95
Bill Pmt -Check	12/11/2019	6844	Public Notice ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-188.95
<b>Liberty Business Systems, Inc.</b>							
Bill	11/19/2019	Inv. #...	Contract Bas...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-156.38
Bill Pmt -Check	11/19/2019	6835	Contract Bas...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-156.38
<b>Mike's</b>							
Bill	11/20/2019		MPO Lunche...	206 · Accounts Pay...		711 · Miscellan...	-104.41
Bill Pmt -Check	11/20/2019	6837	MPO Lunche...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-104.41
<b>Minnesota Department of Revenue</b>							
Liability Check	11/29/2019	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking		210 · Payroll Li...	-203.00
Liability Check	12/13/2019	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking		210 · Payroll Li...	-192.00
<b>Nationwide Retirement Solutions</b>							
Liability Check	11/29/2019	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-390.92
Liability Check	12/13/2019	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-390.92
<b>NDPERS</b>							
Liability Check	11/29/2019	NDPE...	D88	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-5,105.60
<b>QuickBooks Payroll Service</b>							
Liability Check	11/27/2019		Created by P...	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-15,185.88
Liability Check	12/11/2019		Created by P...	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-6,627.71
<b>SRF Consulting Group, Inc.</b>							
Bill	11/29/2019	Inv. #...	Work On UN...	206 · Accounts Pay...		565 · Special ...	-3,579.07
Bill Pmt -Check	11/29/2019	6840	Work On UN...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-3,579.07
<b>Systems &amp; Services, Inc.</b>							
Bill	11/29/2019	Inv. #...	2020 Labels	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-37.46
Bill Pmt -Check	11/29/2019	6841	2020 Labels	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-37.46
<b>West Interactive Services</b>							
Bill	11/19/2019	Inv. #...	CivicLive Prof...	206 · Accounts Pay...		525 · Citizens ...	-2,350.00
Bill Pmt -Check	11/19/2019	6836	CivicLive Prof...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-2,350.00