

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Zoom Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:36 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present via teleconference call: Jason Peterson, NDDOT-Grand Forks; David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering; Patrick Hopkins, MnDOT-District 2; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks Planning; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planning; Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit; Wayne Zacher, NDDOT-Local Government; and Ryan Riesinger, Airport Authority.

Absent: Brad Bail, Steve Emery, Stephanie Halford, Richard Audette, Jane Williams, Jesse Kadrmas, Jon Mason, Michael Johnson, Ryan Brooks, Ali Rood, Lane Magnuson, Lars Christianson, Nick West, and Rich Sanders.

Guest(s) present: Kristen Sperry, FHWA-Bismarck; Baird Bream, Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (NDDOT Transportation Plan Consultant); Rebecca Geyer, NDDOT; and Anna Pierce, MnDOT-St. Paul.

Staff: 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**

Haugen declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2020, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY GENGLER, TO APPROVE THE MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2020 MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS PRESENTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

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**MATTER OF DISCUSSION ON NDDOT STATEWIDE LONG RANGE  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Haugen reported that the press release is included in staff report. He explained that while there are many similarities to the MPO planning process, there are two major differences that need to be pointed out; the first is that the Forks MPO must coordinate with the two statewide long range transportations plans to craft a Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the results of these two state efforts requires the Forks MPO to meld together the similarities and differences between the two efforts, but some things the MPO addresses may not be incorporated at the same level within the NDDOT plan. He said that the second difference is that the MPO has very specific planning and fiscal constraints in its plan while the NDDOT is not required to meet this same level of detail, therefore the NDDOT will not be project specific nor identify fiscal constraint issues; however the NDDOT plan will include discussion of future revenues, alternative funding sources, and potential future funding needs to meet customer expectations.

Haugen commented that MnDOT has announced that they will also be updating their Long Range Transportation Plan. He added that it is hoped to be able to have both plans available for discussion at a Technical Advisory Committee meeting soon.

Haugen introduced Baird Bream, who is one of the consultants working with the NDDOT on this update, and said that he would be giving a brief presentation on the update.

Bream referred to a Power Point slide presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request), and gave a brief overview of the update.

Presentation ensued.

Bream commented that North Dakota has maintained a Statewide Transportation Plan in accordance with Federal Regulations, the most recent one was developed in 2012 and updated in 2018 to meet updated federal guidance.

Bream stated that they are doing a new Long Range Transportation Plan, are updating the existing one, because they see a lot of trends and challenges, as well as the opportunities that they want to respond to and incorporate into the planning process. He said that they also want to change the process of developing the Long Range Transportation Plan itself, and they see an opportunity to strengthen public and stakeholder engagement through a more extensive on-line engagement program, and they also want to tie their goals and objectives for the Long Range Transportation to specific performance measurements and they also want to define implementation actions so that partner agencies, such as the MPO, understand what is coming from the Statewide Plan.

Bream said that, as he has been emphasizing; Transportation Connection is the Statewide Plan for all transportation issues, and it is designed to look across all modes and all systems; so everything from the traditional roads and bridges to transit, passenger rail, freight rail, etc.; as well as considering aviation and emerging technologies like drones.

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Bream commented that this is designed to be a policy plan, with strategic investment guidance, so rather than a very detailed project, it is more setting a series of policy directions for the State to follow to inform future investment strategies; so when it comes time to populate those transportation improvement programs, it is guided under this consistent frameworks. He added that they also want this to be forward looking and scenario based, recognizing that we are in a time of substantial change, we can't predict the future, so instead we want to identify multiple different cases that may emerge within the State; related to the economy, the population, the development of technology, the environment that we can then use to then form certain scenarios that will shape those polices and investment strategies. He stated that ultimately, we want to insure that we have actionable strategies that can be measured and tied to their tangible results, we want this policy guide to be reflected in the transportation network that gets created.

Bream stated that the goals are to be pretty extensively engaged with the public at every level, working closely with our fellow State, Regional, Tribal, and Local Planning Partners. He said that they are trying to connect with a wide variety of audiences using a pretty extensive on-line engagement platform, and he will highlight the ways to get involved with some of those on-line engagement opportunities at the end of this presentation.

Bream commented that they also want to tell the story of transportation in North Dakota; and they understand that the Transportation Network is something that people use every day, so it kind of fades into the background of daily life, and it is easy to take for granted until something goes wrong, until a road is washed out by flood waters or is blocked by a snowstorm, or a bridge loses it useful life and has to be closed for extensive repairs, so they want to elevate the role that transportation plays in North Dakota by helping people understand its roll within our economy, our community, and help people achieve what they want to achieve each day and make transportation a key component of what makes North Dakota a unique and great state. Bream stated that as part of that they are going to work very hard to understand customer expectations and priorities; understanding what people expect when they use that transportation network on a daily basis, and what they want to see improved or changed about it. He added that in order to make sure that it is actionable, they want to link those expectations and priorities to a willingness to pay, so if people want to see a modernized transportation network, do they understand the cost associated with that and are they willing to pay to achieve it.

Bream referred to the presentation a slide and commented that they have assembled an excellent group for their Director's Advisory Council, that represents State, Regional, and Local entities or organizations, as well trade associations and the private sector as well. He said that they are grateful for their participation and their insight on this and are confident that by having the Director's Advisory Council instituted in this project they will be able to ensure that, again, they can tell the story of transportation for North Dakota because they will understand how North Dakota interacts with all of its different components.

Bream again referred to the presentation and gave a brief overview of the project schedule; explaining what will be accomplished with each phase. He stated that the goal is to have a complete plan in place by the end of the year that they can then engage in dialogue with the State Legislature and pull into a kind of finalized plan in 2021.

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Bream then shifted to an on-line portal and asked that everyone in attendance to complete the survey. He went through the survey questions and shared the results/responses for each.

Bream thanked everyone for participating in the survey, and stated that it has been very informative for them and they really appreciate the input. He added that this isn't the last opportunity for you to provide feedback, and they will be following up with the MPOs at different parts of the project in order to get your input and to get some reaction to the different scenarios and investment strategies, but for now he will just quickly switch back to the final part of today's presentation to encourage everyone to visit them on-line at:

[www.transportationconnection.org](http://www.transportationconnection.org) or [www.dot.nd.gov/projects/lrtp/](http://www.dot.nd.gov/projects/lrtp/). He said that both of these links will take you to their website and there you will find information on what they are doing with Transportation Connection, what the different activities they will be doing are, and it will provide you with some overview on what the Long Range Transportation Plan is supposed to produce and achieve for the region. He added that there will also be some additional surveys that you can take that would be very helpful for them and they will welcome all input on these different topics so they can understand where people's priorities lie, how satisfied people are with these different aspects of the transportation network, and really provide the opportunity for them to get that input factored into their thinking as they start developing these scenarios and investment strategies.

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Haugen commented that he has shared the website, and on the MPO's Facebook Page we have been linking to some of the surveys you have had out, so for the past several months we have been trying to promote North Dakota's Transportation Connection. Bream responded that they really appreciate it.

Haugen said that he knows that there have been some additional members joining the meeting, and asked that they introduce themselves.

Rebecca Geyer stated that she leads the Planning and Rail Section at the NDDOT and she is actually pinch-hitting today for Stuart Malakovic, who is their project manager for Transportation Connection as he is double booked and she is really excited that they can share this opportunity to gain more information from you Technical Advisory Committee, as well as the MPO.

Dale Bergman stated that he can join the meeting by phone, and he can see everyone on his phone, but he can't get the video or audio to work.

Kristen Sperry stated that she was able to log-in.

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**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF EAST GRAND FORKS LAND USE PLAN UPDATE  
CONTRACT**

Kouba reported that the RFP was sent out and they did receive four proposals. She said that all four were interviewed June 25<sup>th</sup> and the Selection Committee selected WSB Consulting, and they did come in on budget.

Kouba referred to the proposed schedule in the Scope Of Work, included in the packets, and stated that it lists the various tasks that they will be performing including public engagement, both in-person and on-line, to get as much input as possible.

Kouba commented that there isn't anything out of the ordinary in the proposal; adding that one of the things they proposed is to ensure that the end product is something that is very useful, very easy for people to read and understand, for the general public to understand as those are the kind of things that WSB was stating that they would be able to provide for everybody, so that is the reason why the Selection Committee is recommending WSB.

Kouba stated that both the Selection Committee and MPO Staff are recommending the Technical Advisory Committee approve forwarding a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board to approve hiring WSB to do the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan.

Haugen commented that many of you, who worked with the Grand Forks 2045 Land Use Plan, should be familiar with WSB and the Team; Erin Purdue is again going to be the Project Manager on behalf of WSB and they are also going to have a Community Engagement Group.

Pierce said that, although she knows that she isn't a voting member of the Technical Advisory Committee, but she has a question. She said that she is curious how this project is being funded, as she has a little bit of concern with eligibility, and she had emailed Ms. Kouba and yourself, with that concern but she hasn't heard back and she doesn't know if Mr. Zacher has anything to weigh in on as well. Kouba responded that as far as eligibility, it is our understanding from the NDDOT the project itself is eligible for planning funds, but she knows that you have some concerns about East Grand Forks' inclusion in that eligibility, but she believes that they participate in the local share for the MPO funds.

Pierce stated that her concern is that CPG dollars typically have to be used for transportation specific tasks, and a land use plan, unless there are specific transportation aspects to the land use plan, typically aren't eligible, so she was looking at you tasks and she couldn't find very many that she would consider eligible, but she doesn't know how Mr. Zacher feels about it as well, so that is why she is considered about if East Grand Forks is over-matching to cover those ineligible tasks. Kouba responded that all of it will relate back to our transportation plan, and in the RFP it was requested that there is a lot of connections with transit and bike and ped activities for land usage. She added that this is kind of the basis for all of our numbers that we get for future growth for our transportation networks as well, and we have not had any issues in the past.

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Haugen commented that this is something that we have done five or six times; every five years, that we have done these land use planning efforts, and just as five years ago the scope of works are very similar; unless there has been a substantial change in federal rules and regulations it has been deemed acceptable by the past state and federal reviewers we have had. He said that we would be curious as to what rules and regulations have changed what we are doing today versus what we were allowed to do five years ago; and he guesses we would hope that as we review the RFP and the scope of work in the RFP that we could also clarify some of these issues prior to now, when we are trying to approve a contract, but also realize that we have new people assuming new duties. Pierce said that she isn't trying to throw this in at the last minute which is why she tried to reach out earlier to get some clarification on some of this so, but she is mostly curious as to whether or not Mr. Zacher has any concerns about this; adding that she spoke to Bobbi Retzlaff to see what she thought and she did have a few concerns, but no one at MnDOT, that she is aware of, and Megan, who was in this position between Bobbi and herself, did not review the RFP, so they are just trying to follow up to make sure no one gets in trouble on any end.

Zacher stated that he looked through the RFP, and he understood, as Ms. Kouba explained, that it is being used as the basis for the next MTP for the Grand Forks Area, so he didn't have any issue with it, but he is still pretty new, but he did bring it up with Mike, and he didn't seem to have any issues with it either.

Haugen said that the good news is that this is just a recommending body to next weeks' MPO Board, and if Anna could forward those areas of concern to us, and if Mr. Zacher could communicate with Mike Johnson, he thinks that even Ms. Sperry, within Federal Highway; he knows that in his 20-plus years there have been discussions between the MPOs and Federal Highway North Dakota Division on this eligibility question and in the end it has always worked with how we are pursuing this current update to the land use plan, but if we could spend the next several days before the MPO Executive Policy Board meeting to make sure that we are dotting all "I's" and crossing all "T's" that would be good. Pierce stated that she would forward that information by the end of the week.

Zacher asked how things are coming on the QVS package; he doesn't want to end up being towards the end and then scrambling to put that together so just keep that in mind as we are getting towards those contract signatures. Haugen responded that he believes they are working on the checklist and getting it filled out and completed with the documentation needed provided as well.

Haugen commented that it seems that the motion for this item may need to be reworded to be contingent upon State and Federal Partners discussion on eligibility.

***MOVED BY GENGLER, SECONDED BY ELLIS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE CONTRACT WITH WSB CONSULTING, SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY BY FEDERAL AND STATE PARTNERS.***

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***Voting Aye: Zacher, Kuharenko, Gengler, Peterson, Ellis, Bergman, Riesinger, and Hopkins.***

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Kadrmas, Halford, Audette, Emery, Rood, West, Bail, Magnuson, Sanders, Mason, Johnson, Williams, and Christianson.***

**MATTER OF DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION STUDY UPDATE**

Haugen reported that this is an update on the Downtown Transportation Study, and many of you are also on the Steering Committee and were able to participate in a June committee meeting that was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June. He said that included in the agenda packet are some items of interest from that meeting.

Haugen stated that the first item he is showing is that there is a new schedule, due primarily to COVID-19's effect on work and engagement activities. He pointed out that we were originally scoped to complete the study by now, but as you can see we are now extending the deadline to November, and that will allow us to be able to complete all tasks and do good community engagement in the final steps of the process.

Haugen said that the next pieces of information are based on the Alternative Analysis Report that was submitted to the Steering Committee for their review and consideration, and the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting was a presentation of that report. He added that the full report is available on the website: [www.dtforksmobility.com](http://www.dtforksmobility.com), as with all the other previous information so feel free to go there and read the full report.

Haugen referred to a slide and commented that the summary is provided in this graphic; as all summaries are, it doesn't do great justice but it does give you a good base of information as to some of the alternatives that are being considered. He added that they realize that not all alternatives will be ranked highly or be moved forward, but this is what would be the universe of alternatives that have been identified.

Haugen said that there has been, from the consultant's point of view, some analysis of what the alternatives have in regard to the impact to the travel mode, or that planning level cost to implement, so instead of other values they are utilizing these symbols, and from these symbols you can look at the individual alternative and get some idea of how it impacts the mode specific and also kind of a cost item.

Haugen stated that the Steering Committee was provided a worksheet to review all of these alternatives, and they were asked to give them some consideration as to whether or not they thought they were critical and/or have a benefit or are less impactful, and those that they deemed critical they were then asked to rank in priority order, and those worksheets are still be completed and are due this Friday so it is hoped that from them we can then narrow down the alternatives into those that the Steering Committee has indicated are more favorable.

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Haugen said there are a couple more items to note; at the Steering Committee meeting there was maybe some comment, or a request that came afterward the meeting to provide a concept of the roundabout at the bottom of the overpass location. He referred to a graphic and stated that it is what is in the alternative report document, and it was also part of the presentation, but it was smaller in those regards so it has been blown up to a full page, and the concept is to utilize what is kind of a green space with the hotel complex into creating a roundabout on DeMers and these two intersections that are creating a little confusion, so that is the conceptual drawing that is provided for the roundabout that has multi-lanes entering and exiting on DeMers and single lanes on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Haugen stated that lastly there was some discussion at the Steering Committee meeting about location of a crosswalk. He pointed out where it is currently located, and where the floodwall is located, and explained that it is just on the dry side inside the floodwall; and MnDOT and the City of East Grand Forks are working on a local partnership project program that will make some pavement improvements through this corridor and one of the items they are addressing is the issue of these crosswalks consisting of stamped concrete that is deteriorating, and does create some ADA issues, so the concept is to take that stamped concrete and replace it with a colored concrete and then to smooth out some of the asphalt areas of the project, so during discussion the question was raised as to whether or not this crossing should be reinstalled where it is or if it should be relocated to the intersection or right at the end of the bridge itself. He said that MnDOT has prepared this document that includes the graphic being shown, and they have distributed it within the District. He asked if Mr. Hopkins has any additional information he would like to share on this, otherwise he can share what Jon Mason had shared with him about which ABC was moving forward. Hopkins asked that he share what Jon said because he just gave him the update because he couldn't be here today; he said that their Traffic Engineer, Michelle, had reviewed it and didn't have any concerns with moving it, but he wasn't aware of the "A", but it looked like the "B" was the alternative that Jon had relayed to him, but just that she had no concerns with it moving, but just wanted to know if there was any public engagement on it what the businesses thought and what the consensus was, but they agreed that consistency on both sides of the bridge would be the preferred alternative. Haugen said that all he would add that Jon provided was that with the local partnership project it could move forward without having to identify specifically where the crossing is, the funds are in the cost estimate to replace the stamped concrete and to reinstall colored concrete somewhere in this vicinity, the public engagement process can help identify exactly where it should be located, if it is A, B, or C, so that is where the Downtown Transportation Study will present this at our next public engagement process and we can see and hear what the business/property owners and the clients of the downtown transportation system have for input on relocating the crosswalk.

Kuharenko asked, with the extended schedule is there any change to the agreement amount. Haugen responded that there is not a change in the agreement amount. Kuharenko said that he knows that he was one of those that made a comment on the roundabout, so thank you for making that change, and then also just to make sure that the rest of the committee is aware, overall this universe of projects just kind of; they are just doing some rough figuring, but they are talking somewhere in the ballpark of \$21.5 to \$37.5 million dollars worth of projects, which is a lot of projects in the downtown area, but a lot of good projects to look at as well.



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Haugen stated that, if there are no other comments or questions, keep an eye out in your e-mail and for other announcements for the next public engagement opportunity that will be coming in the next few weeks.

Information only.

**MATTER OF T.I.P. SCORING SHEETS UPDATE**

Haugen reported that this item is continuing our discussion that we have been having on our T.I.P. Procedural Manual. He stated that this last portion of the update is focusing on the scoring sheets that we have for the individual programs.

Haugen commented that back in May we looked at the weighting system we had on the scoring; we identified that instead of eight we would increase our scoring criteria to ten, which equaled the planning factors and the actual goals of our Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Haugen said that they did not receive any feedback, to his knowledge, on the weights or the increase to ten, so the next step are the individual yes/no scoring sheets for the program. He pointed out that they included the State Highway, the Local Roads, and the Transportation Alternatives programs, and the County Road System, so they have created, then, the individual questions that we are asking people to simply answer yes or no whether the project is providing for that item. He added that many of these objectives are, as what they are, objectives from the MTP, and so they just want to remind everyone that we don't require a minimum score in order for it to be forwarded into the T.I.P. process, but they do ask that each project does have a score sheet attached to it, and MPO staff is available to assist you in filling them out.

Haugen commented that this is the work of our previous intern, Nessa, and so just as we gave her great accolades for the work she did when we discussed that work in May; this is also some good work that she provided. He said that a lot of the bold italicized items are new to the scoring criteria, and a lot of it is just adding in the new items, and particularly the resiliency, reliability and travel tourism.

Haugen said that, just as before, we are asking you to review and provide comments on these scoring sheets. He added that anyone has any questions or comments for the Technical Advisory Committee discussion, that would be awesome, however if you have the time and opportunity to look at these please provide feedback sooner than later.

Kuharenko asked if this would be available in an Excel Template so they can just drop in their scores and it would automatically calculate the total weight of the score. Haugen responded that Nessa has drafted that up for us.

Haugen said that, again, if you have questions or comments or critiques of the form we would appreciate getting those sooner than later. He added that he believes that we are now in a position to put this all into one document; we have the T.I.P. Procedural Manual that we reviewed earlier this year, and have looked at the program matrix and updated that to reflect all

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of the current funding programs; particularly on the federal side, and the last piece was generally the scoring sheets, and so with that he thinks that next month we will have a complete Draft T.I.P. Procedural Manual for review and consideration.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

a. 2020 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that you can see that based on some of the discussion we had today where we are at with the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan, where we are at on the Downtown Transportation Study. He said that we are still working our way through the Grand Forks Land Use Plan RFP and given today's discussion there will be some outcome based on what we find out by next Wednesday how we will approach the Grand Forks Land Use Plan Update.

Haugen pointed out that the other big study that is still on hold, waiting for the hydraulic study results, is whether we do a future bridge traffic study.

b. Future Agenda Items

Haugen reported that, just to prepare you for a couple of agenda items for next months meeting; we will be looking for final approval of the next T.I.P. document itself, holding the public hearing on it.

Haugen stated that we will also be holding discussion on our next two-year work program. He said that the discussion might not be all inclusive because our funds are fairly limited and we anticipate that perhaps beside our required work we might be able to just squeeze in an update to our aerial photos, but we are still working with our DOT friends to come up with an estimated total consolidated planning amount; which would really determine whether we can go beyond just adding the aerial photo or other work, so we will start the discussion in August and take action in September in order to get everything signed, sealed and delivered so our State and Federal Partners can review it by the end of the year so

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 8, 2020  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 2:46 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,  
Office Manager