PROCEEDINGS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 12th, 2020 Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Haugen, Chairman, called the August 12th, 2020, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:30 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present via Zoom: David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering; Brad Gengler, Grand Forks Planning; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planning; Dale Bergman, Cities Area Transit; Wayne Zacher, NDDOT-Local Government; Ryan Riesinger, Airport Authority; Brad Bail, East Grand Forks Consulting Engineer; and Jon Mason, MnDOT-District 2.

Absent: Steve Emery, Stephanie Halford, Jason Peterson, Patrick Hopkins, Jesse Kadrmas, Michael Johnson, Ryan Brooks, Lane Magnuson, Lars Christianson, Nick West, and Rich Sanders.

Guest(s) present: Kristen Sperry, FHWA-North Dakota; Bobbi Retzlaff, FHWA-Minnesota; 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 JULY 8TH, 2020, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY KUHARENKO, TO APPROVE THE JULY 8TH, 2020 MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2020 SELF-CERTIFICATION

Haugen reported that included in the packet, this year, is a more detailed self-certification document. He explained that every third or fourth year the MPO prepares a more detailed self-certification document, although annually in each T.I.P., which is the next agenda item, it is included as an appendix item and also as one of the certifications in the front of the document, we self-certify, but again every third or fourth year we do this deeper document to do a more complete job of how we are self-certifying.

Haugen said, then, that included in the packet is the draft document. He pointed out that it basically follows the same format that we did the last time we prepared the document; it has been updated to reflect any actions that we've taken since the prior update. He stated that our current work program, for example, our transportation plan has been updated since then, our public participation plan has been updated, but otherwise it is identifying each of the requirements we do to self-certify and the description and action that the MPO has done.

Zacher commented that on the flow chart in the document, in the legend there is a direct authority solid line, and he is wondering if that is what the side pieces are, because everything else looks like it has a dashed line, so he wasn't sure if the arrows that are pointing towards the executive committee was direct authority or not. Haugen responded that those are showing who comprises the policy board, and what agency they represent. Zacher said, though, that in the legend it has that direct authority line, so is that what those comprises are or is there a missing line or is one labeled incorrectly. Haugen responded that the direct line of authority is that they are appointed from these various bodies to form the MPO Board. Zacher said that that made sense.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BAIL, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE 2020 SELF-CERTIFICATION DOCUMENT, AS PRESENTED.

Voting Aye: Zacher, Kuharenko, Gengler, Ellis, Riesinger, Bail, and Mason.

Voting Nay: None. Abstain: None.

Absent: Kadrmas, Halford, Emery, West, Bail, Magnuson, Sanders, Peterson, Hopkins, Johnson, and Christianson.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF DRAFT FINAL 2021-2024 T.I.P.

Haugen reported that this item is to look at our document that is the Final T.I.P. for FY2021-2024.

Haugen stated that, as noted on the agenda, we did publish a public notice for this agenda item. He said that the public was invited to review the document, which was available in both City Halls, as well as on-line. He added that, as you all know Grand Forks City Hall is somewhat

open to the public, but East Grand Forks City Hall is still closed to the public, but an appointment could be made.

Haugen commented that the notice identified that if comments were received by noon today they would be provided to the committee and recorded as part of the meeting as if they were personally presented. He said that we did not receive any general public comments, but we did receive some comments from both State DOTs and our Federal Highway North Dakota and Minnesota counterparts.

Haugen stated that if he could summarize those comments, unfortunately the MPO provided a document that had a lot of simple errors as to what year it covers, some of those types of editorial/editing errors that should not have happened but unfortunately did. He said that there were some more general comments that we should address, and he would identify that the first one we should talk about is our Performance Based Planning and Programming section.

Haugen referred to that portion of the document and explained that it is a recent addition to our T.I.P. document, and we previously were identifying what the performance measures were, which this document does identify, and there was a general write up of how this T.I.P. is addressing those targets. He stated that what comments they received said that we should be more informative as to what our actual targets are, whether they are MPO area specific targets or if we adopted the Statewide targets; and then identify, perhaps, in better detail than what our current discussion is as to how we are progressing towards those targets. He added that there is some language that does that, obviously if you look at the document we have not identified the MPO targets that have been adopted, but they can easily be inserted as they have been adopted and are not new to either the MPO or the public.

Haugen said that another good comment to point out is, in our T.I.P. Listings, if you notice East Grand Forks has a #13, and if you look at the North Dakota side we have a Grand Forks #13, which is fine when you look at each side individually, but it shows up as a problem when we get to our Environmental Justice map, where we then use the same numbering system for both sides so it is possible that you will see the same number on either side of the river without understanding that a #19, for example, in downtown Grand Forks and #19 in downtown East Grand Forks are completely separate projects, funded by different agencies, using different funding sources, so the resolution we have come up with for that, and hopefully this slide shows it, is to indicate these projects by using the State abbreviation in front of the number so it gives you some sense of which side of the river that number project corresponds to.

Haugen stated that in the EJ projects themselves, our general guidance in the past has been to identify some example projects, and we tried to do that but our wording was probably indicating a more specific that there were only eight projects that either border or are entirely within the EJ; there are more than eight and so we have some poor wording there.

Haugen summarized that those are some of the items that were commented on; the more pertinent one is the Performance Based comment.

Haugen commented that the third category would be just an overall template of how our T.I.P. document looks. He said that the State DOTs, in particular, had some overall comments of how they would like to substantially reformat the T.I.P. document, reorganize it into different sections, provide more description on some things. He stated that he will leave it at that and will allow either State or Federal Highway reps to provide additional comment if they wish on the comments they submitted to us.

Pierce stated that she will elaborate a little bit more on that third point you noted, as she thinks you clarified the other points pretty well, but the formatting is something they noted that maybe over this next year we take a look at restructuring it to make it more publicly accessible, and the goal of their comments was to make sure that Mr. Zacher and herself coordinated, and they spoke with Federal Highway on both sides as well to make sure that they were all consistent on this and they all agreed that they would just like to see it a little bit more public friendly so that the public can understand and know what they are reading, so that is really the point of the majority of the comments, specifically the formatting.

Zacher said that he thinks Ms. Pierce summarized their comments very nicely. He added that the more they talked the more it seemed like if we can meet in the October/November timeframe, after the T.I.P. and UPWP and everything else is off our plates, and go through and see what we can do to make it more user friendly and understandable for the general public would be their preference. He added that in reading through this document he knows that he personally ended up going through it multiple times just to try to make sure that he was able to understand what it is trying to say, so from a general public trying to comprehend it, he thinks it would be even more difficult so he thinks if we are able to make it more user friendly it would be beneficial for everyone. He asked if Mr. Haugen had any concerns with being able to address some of the comments, specifically some of the editorial type comments, does he see a need to address all those comments before the Policy Board meets. Haugen responded that he does feel that those are achievable, with the biggest one, again, just the performance based, but he thinks they can get something to them by the end of the week for them to review and still allow for them to make any further comments on those changes. He added that many of the other comments are pretty straightforward simplistic ones, and then the format, as you stated, can be worked on over the next year. Haugen commented that just to let the rest of the Technical Advisory Committee members know, most of these comments were received late vesterday or early this morning, by MPO Staff, and the State DOTs also provided some example T.I.P.s from other MPOs but staff has not had the opportunity to look at them yet, however, working through the Technical Advisory Committee as well staff would propose a different way of comprising and presenting the T.I.P. in the future.

Haugen asked if there were any other comments or questions. He said that typically the major emphasis that we review and comment upon are to make sure that the projects themselves are the proper projects, that we have identified, and that the information contained therein is substantially correct. He asked if anyone had any comments on the project listings themselves.

Mason stated that they thoroughly looked through the list and it matches the projects that are in their S.T.I.P. He said that he did notice one inconsistency on Page 78 of 210, the chart, where

there are two projects listed as #11. Haugen responded that that is just one of those errors that they are cleaning up by adding the State abbreviation in front of those numbers that are the same for both sides.

Pierce said that she has a question related to the public involvement and public input opportunities. She stated that, just comparatively she has seen that other MPOs across the State have had a lot of public input so she is just curious; she knows that the MPO did the legal ads in the newspapers and also posted the information on the MPO website, but she is wondering if there was any type of Facebook page boosting or anything like that, or an on-line virtual open house or anything like that. Haugen responded that he doesn't know if for this draft they did a Facebook posting, but he doesn't believe there was anything other than what we posted on our website as far as notifying that the open house was being held, and also publishing the notice in two local newspapers of general circulation. Pierce stated that in the future it just might be something to look into doing.

Haugen stated that from an MPO Staff perspective a motion to perhaps consider is to recommend approval subject to cleaning up the editorial changes as noted by our State and Federal Partners, and then also to work with our State and Federal Partners along with the Technical Advisory Committee on resolving the Performance Based Planning and Programming section. He added that in addition, either including in this motion, or as a separate motion, to recommend that we spend the next several months coming up with a different T.I.P. format; this could be combined in the original motion or made as a separate motion.

Haugen said that one of the comments received was regarding the Program of Projects, or POP, which is transit terminology, and each Triennial Review we make sure that we are making it known that there is an agreement between our two local transit operators to utilize the MPO Public Participation Process and the T.I.P. as their Program of Projects, and so in our notices and other resolutions we worked through the language that satisfies the Triennial Review comments.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY BERGMAN, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE DRAFT FINAL 2021-2024 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO MAKING THE EDITORIAL CHANGES AS NOTED BY OUR STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS, AND TO WORK WITH SAID PARTNERS AND THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO RESOLVE THE PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING SECTION, AS NOTED.

Voting Aye: Zacher, Kuharenko, Gengler, Ellis, Riesinger, Bail, Bergman, and Mason.

Voting Nay: None.
Abstain: None.

Absent: Kadrmas, Halford, Emery, West, Bail, Magnuson,

Sanders, Peterson, Hopkins, Johnson, and Christianson.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY KUHARENKO, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE REQUESTING MPO STAFF WORK WITH STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS TO REFORMAT THE T.I.P. TEMPLATE FOR FUTURE T.I.P. DOCUMENTS.

Voting Aye: Zacher, Kuharenko, Gengler, Ellis, Riesinger, Bail, Bergman, and Mason.

Voting Nay: None. Abstain: None.

Absent: Kadrmas, Halford, Emery, West, Bail, Magnuson,

Sanders, Peterson, Hopkins, Johnson, and Christianson.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2020 T.I.P. PROCEDURAL MANUAL

Haugen reported that staff has been working for many months on updating our T.I.P. Procedural Manual. He said that throughout the year at various Technical Advisory Committee and MPO Executive Policy Board meetings we have been presenting sections and segments of the document for review and comments, and today we all of those review and comments incorporated into this final draft of the document itself.

Haugen said that, just to give an overview, the table of contents identifies pertinent sections of the T.I.P. document, and it is a document that they hope helps explains the T.I.P. process almost from start to finish, how we solicit projects to how we either do modifications or amendments to the T.I.P. document once it is approved.

Haugen commented that there are several pages of appendices; Appendix 3 is the one we most recently reviewed at our last few Technical Advisory Committee meetings, and that is the actual scoring sheets. He explained that all projects submitted to the MPO get these scoring sheets applied to them to show how the projects are consistent with our transportation plan.

Haugen stated that the last appendix is something we haven't shared with the Technical Advisory Committee, however it is a checklist that is produced by MnDOT, so he isn't sure it is subject to much of a review or comment from either the Technical Advisory Committee or the Executive Policy Board. He added that in the past North Dakota had a similar checklist, but he doesn't believe they have been using one recently, so that is why only the Minnesota checklist is included in this appendix.

Pierce asked if there is a reason why this information is not included in the T.I.P. itself. Haugen responded that the basic reason is because it would add another sixty-six pages or so to the T.I.P. document. Pierce stated that she would like to see it included as an appendix in the T.I.P. at some point, and we can discuss this further, but she thinks that if this is talking during the revision process and the approval process it is important that it is easily accessible to the public. Haugen responded that that will be part of the discussion in our previous motion for the T.I.P.

Kuharenko said that, regarding the regionally significant projects, which he believes is in Section 6 – Program Information, and he knows he brought this up previously but he just wants to make sure that just the City of Grand Forks submitting their 6-year CIP to the MPO, it is sufficient. He explained that he knows that their concern on that is generally just the amount of documentation that might be required for a project that is being done by the City itself, and not trying to either duplicate or produce an excess of documentation, so he just wants to make sure that just providing the 6-year CIP for the City is sufficient for what you are looking for. Haugen responded that he believes it will be, although he thinks we might ask that you trim down your CIP so that we don't get projects that aren't pertinent to the T.I.P. itself, because the whole CIP has a bunch of different categories and investments. Kuharenko said that he is talking more street and infrastructure 6-year CIP, not the city-wide one. Haugen responded that he does think that it is possible that that would be sufficient.

Haugen commented that, again, this was an update to a document that we prepared back in 2010; it is trying to catch up and get is more pertinent as to where we stand today, and it is a living document so there is potential to make changes in the future if appropriate.

MOVED BY GENGLER, SECONDED BY KUHARENKO, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE UPDATED 2020 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT (T.I.P.) PROCEDURAL MANUAL, AS PRESENTED.

Voting Aye: Zacher, Kuharenko, Gengler, Ellis, Riesinger, Bergman, and Mason.

Voting Nay: None. Abstain: None.

Absent: Kadrmas, Halford, Emery, West, Bail, Magnuson,

Sanders, Peterson, Hopkins, Johnson, and Christianson.

MATTER OF 2021-2022 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Haugen reported that we are at the end of our current two-year work program, so we need to prepare and submit to our State and Federal partners a new two-year work program covering 2021 and 2022.

Haugen stated that included in the packet was a staff report that identifies what the expected funding circumstance would be for those two years. He said that we are obligated to do some things in our current 2020 work program that would carry over into 2021; those are the three items identified in the staff report, and we also need to make sure that we are maintaining and keeping our overall metropolitan transportation plan up to date so we are starting the transit development update in 2021, and then you see in 2022 we will then address the other two elements of our overall transportation plan, that is the Bike/Ped element and the Street and Highway element, and those have been identified since the adoption of the current 2045 Land Use Plan in our previous documents, this happens to be referenced in our current work program where we identified the major timelines to make sure that our 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is done in time as well.

Haugen commented that he mentioned last month that the bulk of our funds are committed, if you will, to projects currently undertaken, or that need to be undertaken in order to keep our MTP current; however, we do think that we may have roughly \$50,000 in 2021, although we, as MPO staff, have identified our regular cycle of doing an aerial photo update for the metro area, so we have tentatively identified that for potential use of those funds.

Haugen stated that the other thing they identified was, there has been discussion, particularly with our Transit Operators, about the potential of using some other transit funds to assist in the transit development plan update; a possibility of utilizing those funds might bring a good amount of funds to a substantial amount of funds to the work programs. He added that he guesses probably one of the things that would be useful is if there are studies that people are contemplating that could use funds from the MPO if there were funds freed up, what those might be and that would perhaps assist us with our pursuit, how far we go with those transit dollars. He said that, as an example, he knows that in the past we have done some regular updates of pavement management, there was a period of time when pavement management, on the Federal Aid System, was something that was not eligible for MPO CPG funds, but a few years ago that was reversed a few years ago, so it is an eligible activity.

Haugen commented that essentially what today's agenda item is is if you have other activities out there, what are they and then if there are activities then perhaps we should have further discussion on supplementing the Consolidated Planning Grant funds with Transit funds; and if somebody has funding out there that we aren't aware of, we would like to have that conversation as well so that by September, perhaps we would have a good idea, if there are other revenue sources and other studies, if you do have a study we would like to have a conversation do make sure it is eligible before we go through a formal vetting process. He added that they do like to have any of these additional studies go through your local governmental body to concur that they want the study done, so that means that if we are meeting our November 1st deadline to submit to our Lead State, that in October we are processing a document that we think is identifying all of the activities that MPO will undertake in 2021 and 2022.

Kuharenko asked, with that tentative scheduling of that aerial photo for 2021, he knows in the past that the MPO has had a 6-inch pixel resolution on that, and he knows that more recently the City has gone with a 3-inch pixel resolution, so if it would be possible to switch that up and update to a 3-inch pixel resolution that would be great, if it ultimately decided that we are going with an aerial imaging project in 2021 is preferred. Haugen responded that they would give that consideration and will have Ms. Kouba formulate a budget estimate to see if it makes a significant difference between 6-inch and 3-inch pixels, then we can exchange further information and discuss it more in September to see how it fits with the funding available. He added that he knows that typically we also go to other member jurisdictions or partners to see if they would like additional things done; while the opportunity is there to have additional technology incorporated into the aerial photo, he knows that East Grand Forks Water and Light Department has considered, in the past, some additional funding to utilize the opportunity, and many years ago the Airport participated to make sure that we were capturing all of the area they need to have for their airport planning. He said that essentially the program is based off of the MPO Study Area, and as Mr. Kuharenko identified, we have been utilizing that 6-inch

resolution, and we have had discussions in the past about LIDAR and other things but we have never pulled the trigger on them as an MPO, so that is something that we would have further communication on over the next month or so.

Haugen reiterated that this is a two year work program, but at the end of 2021 we typically take a look at what is programmed in 2022 to make sure it is still germane, as we don't automatically roll into it without any thought of whether or not it needs changes made to it.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON NDDOT STATEWIDE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Haugen reported that, as we were informed last month in particular, but through previously communications, the NDDOT is updating their Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan. He stated that they have attached a monthly presentation to keep us informed. He added that there were some past events, statewide, that we could have taken opportunities; they are launching a new Scenario Planning in the next few weeks, and some additional information is provided on these sheets, so if you have not visited Transportation Connection yet, he would encourage you to do so.

Haugen commented that he believes he even saw in today's Grand Forks Herald, a specific virtual public opportunity for engagement, although he apologizes that he didn't really capture what it said. He asked if Mr. Zacher knew anything about this. Zacher responded that he hasn't worked much with this, but most of what he knows is what we heard last month at the Technical Advice Committee meeting.

Haugen said, again, that the scenarios would be something to take a look at at the website, and if he does find that notice that was in the paper he will send it around to the Technical Advisory Committee members as well.

Haugen stated that, as noted, MnDOT is starting to update their Statewide Multi-Model Plan. He said that he isn't aware of any additional update other than they are going to be updating it. Pierce commented that she is on the SMTP Project Team and they are currently going through and determining how they are going to reach out to the MPOs and other stakeholders, as well as the public so you should be hearing from them shortly to figure out when they can set up time to talk to the MPO and get some feedback and input on the Statewide Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. She added that they also should be presenting at the MN MPO Summer Workshop as well, but more will come on this.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. 2020 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that this is our monthly update of where the MPO is at on its major activities. He pointed out that the Grand Forks Land Use Plan is not proceeding as we had originally hoped, and as scheduled in our program, but they hope that the rest of the year you will see a lot more progress and work done on it.

Haugen stated that for the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan the consultant has been hired, and is under contract, and the initial kick-off meeting with the Consultant Team, the City and the MPO was held, so that work is underway.

Haugen commented that the Future Bridge Traffic Impact Hydraulic Study Report has been presented; again that report was outside the MPO and financed and processed by both City Councils, and it is basically stating that of the three sites looked at there is a likelihood that bridges could be built at any of the three sites, and it also included updated cost estimates, so you are more than able to look at the Grand Fork City Website, for sure, to look at the full hydraulic study document. He added that we will see how that information proceeds through the Cities and the MPO Board for when and how we take up this work activity.

Haugen stated that the Downtown Transportation Study currently has a virtual open house going on, and hopefully you have had a chance to go on-line and view the information that is there, and it is a substantial amount so hopefully it isn't too overwhelming.

Haugen said that our count program is still ongoing; and he believes that all of the intersections that we've asked ATAC to get up and operational are up and collecting traffic count data.

Zacher asked, on the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan Update, is the DOT involved with that, as he doesn't have anything on his calendar on the Kick-Off Meeting or anything like that, so is MnDOT involved with that, or are either DOT involved with it. Haugen responded that not at the Kick-Off Meeting level, as it was really just between City Staff and the MPO Staff to get to know the team members. He added that there is a Steering Committee that is being formed, and that is where the DOT will likely be involved. Zacher stated that he was just curious if that was a Steering Committee Kick-Off meeting. Haugen responded that it wasn't the Steering Committee Kick-Off meeting. Mason asked if he was on the Steering Committee. Haugen responded that he is pegged to be on there, but he doesn't think that an announcement has been made as to who all the Steering Committee members are yet.

Sperry said that she has a general question; she was just wondering what your public participation has been like with the shut-down of everything since March; have you seen an increase, about the same, or less participation. Haugen responded that they have seen an increase in our on-line activity, but obviously we have seen a lot less in-person/personal participation; it has almost exclusively gone to the on-line participation. He added that our web-site activity is up, our Facebook activity is considerably up, so that is what we have been experiencing.

Pierce said that she also has a general question/comment; she just found out the MPO has a new website, which she was excited to see, but she is wondering if there is a timeframe as to when you would be transitioning to the new website completely, and if you are going to keep the domain for the old site at least temporarily so if people do type in the .com address it will take them to the .org. Haugen responded that we are transitioning from the old to the new; it is a process that, with COVID-19, we have kind of put that transition on the back burner a bit, and so he thinks that we are working on it as best we can given the circumstances we are under. Pierce asked that once the transition is complete that everyone is notified so they can use the new website link.

Information only.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY KUHARENKO, TO ADJOURN THE AUGUST 12, 2020, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 2:20 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Office Manager