

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
OF THE GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
Wednesday, November 17, 2021 - 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks Training Conference Room/Zoom Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Warren Strandell, Secretary, called the November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:00 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Warren Strandell, Bob Rost, Al Grasser, Mike Powers, Clarence Vetter, and Ken Vein.

Absent: Jeannie Mock and Marc DeMers.

Staff present: 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**

Strandell declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2021, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY ROST, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2021, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON FUTURE BRIDGE TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY**

Haugen reported that we have two sub-items underneath this; the first one is to discuss for a contract amendment. He explained that we are getting towards the tail end of this study, and we had to hold some additional meetings that we hadn't budgeted for, so now we are asking for roughly \$17,000 to conclude this contract, and that allows for the additional meetings, several with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Ad Hoc Group, and then the time extension would go from the end of December to the end of January. He said that identified in the proposal are meetings, how many will be taking place, and the hours to justify the time and cost estimate, so they are asking for a motion to recommend approval authorizing execution of the Contract Amendment #1 to the Contract with Alliant.

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Vein asked if these meetings were not originally anticipated, are they actually needed, and if we didn't have those meetings what would the outcome be. Haugen responded that they had scoped out X number of meetings for the Technical Advisory Committee and the Ad Hoc group and we held that number of meetings; the meetings have been necessary to go through the data in the detail they went through in order to give people the information necessary for them to understand the issue a lot better, plus we are at the end and we think having set that pace, if you will, of going into some information that is necessary to finish so that everybody has a stronger understanding of what it is we are discussing and why we are discussing it. He added that he thinks we are getting that information out and getting that understanding out a lot better than we ever have before; but it has taken that energy, time, and resources to this point and we want to finish it strong so that we aren't quickly ending this project without having a good understanding of the end result. Grasser said, maybe just a comment on that, going through hiring a consultant it is always hard to identify the number of meetings and things, you end up putting something in the contract, and you don't want to put too many in, so it isn't unusual to have to extend a contract because you had more meetings, so he is comfortable with the number of meetings that have been held and that they are necessary, so from his standpoint, again, it isn't unusual to have more meetings and such.

***MOVED BY GRASSER, SECONDED BY VEIN, TO APPROVE AMENDMENT #1 TO THE FUTURE BRIDGE TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY CONTRACT WITH ALLIENT AND ASSOCIATES, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Mock and DeMers.***

Haugen said that to give you a study update, they have now drafted the Evaluation Matrix, which is what we are terming it, so we can compare the three scenarios: the no build, Elks Drive, and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue scenarios.

Haugen commented that they went over the details of the matrix with the Technical Advisory Committee; for the MPO Board he thought he would just show the summary results. He added that you have, in your information, the details but he wanted to spend more time just on the summary of the results. He said that they are also finishing up on two other little pieces that cleaning up, as part of the contract they are drafting a purpose and need statement, and you've seen that; as part of the contract, they sent it around to the review agencies, the environmental agencies. He pointed out that they sent requests to NDDOT, MnDOT and Federal agencies and received responses from ND Game and Fish, ND Geological Survey, ND Parks and Rec, and ND Water Resources. He said that all the feedback they got, there is one standard comment they send back whenever they get these types of solicitation of views, so we aren't seeing any real concern, but we wanted to make you aware of Tech Memo #4, which is a purpose and needs statement and it has been changed to add in this information.

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Haugen stated that Tech Memo 3C added in the information of level of service analysis for the 2030 horizon you asked for, that we discussed last month, so now that memo shows the result of that.

Haugen referred to the Matrix slide and pointed out that it shows the full spreadsheet that shows all of the individual items that are being looked at, and, again, he isn't trying to detail each one of them. He explained that how they went about doing this was they were using that purpose and needs statement as sort of the basis for saying why we are doing it and what we hope to achieve so let's do the evaluation that does identify that. He said that the only other thing that is added to it at the end is sort of a cost component. He pointed out that for each one they have sub-categories to help come up with an analysis. He said that they used sort of a five-point scale, and a double plus meant it achieved it well and a double minus meant it harmed the system.

Haugen said that we are asking now, the Technical Advisory Committee in particular, and you to review it to make sure that we are coming up with something that makes sense, which is understandable, but one thing that we aren't really doing is saying this is the preferred one. He explained that we are getting away from that language and we have been discussing this quite a bit the last several years, but we are just now giving you scoring or ranking and saying that of these alternatives or scenarios we looked at this is how they ranked out according to the criteria; we aren't saying that this is the preferred alternative, that language, technical phrase can't be used unless you are doing a full-blown NEPA document.

Haugen referred to a slide and pointed out that it is a kind of summary. He explained that because it doesn't seem like a lot of people want to pursue the no-build option we are really ranking the Elks versus 32<sup>nd</sup> options. He stated that when we look at the areas where there were differences, and again that matrix is huge and a lot of the cells in the matrix had the exact same results, and so there really wasn't a difference maker between these two scenarios, but these are the ones where we do see differences between the two options, and how they performed based on the criteria used. He pointed out that you can see that it does start to show a difference between the two options.

Haugen commented that if we look at the details of why we show some of these differences; it does come into, again that total miles saved and total hours saved, or less traffic going in front of people's places, so that is kind of the real difference between the two scenarios, and that is where it is showing up in the matrix as well.

Haugen referred to the cost estimate slide and commented that, again, they said that they would use the mitigation that we identified; one mitigation out of several options for individual intersections, so that we would come up with a consistent cost comparison, and so the mitigation that you see under these scenarios are identified. He said that the total cost; if we do nothing, we do have that major intersection at DeMers and Washington where a big dollar investment has to be made in order for it to achieve acceptable level of service for everyone going through that intersection, and so that is roughly in that \$20 million dollar range. He stated that they are using the continuous flow intersection that was detailed out in a corridor study for that intersection, and the basis of that cost, in the study that was done, they actually did inflate that to 2023 and that is

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just over the \$18 million dollar mark, so that is the low point that we are using here for the range of costs.

Haugen stated that for the bridge they are using the hydraulic study for the bridge component costs, and then they are adding in the mitigated intersections that we see here, and those costs, and that is the range that they are coming up here with Elks Drive being right around \$32 to \$33 million, and with 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue being closer to \$40 million total. He added that the big cost difference is for the bridge itself, it isn't at the intersections that have to be mitigated.

Haugen said that when we look at that, the updated costs, with the mitigation of intersections versus the benefits that are derived; and they didn't really change the benefits from our 2018 study, we could have adjusted those for inflation but they would have been adjusted the exact same percentage so in order to keep our costs down, and not ask for more money, we are utilizing those and the travel demand model didn't change either, so the results of the travel demand are the vehicle miles traveled saved and vehicle hours saved. He said that there are some safety savings involved as well, but you can start to see that 32<sup>nd</sup>, from a benefit/cost ratio, outperformed all the other alternatives, and when compared directly against Elks Drive, there is considerably more benefit with 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, so we get a benefit cost ratio of less than 1 for Elks and most likely you will always get a better cost ratio of more than one for 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Haugen reiterated that we aren't saying that one alternative is preferred over the other, we are just showing the results based on criteria of how they perform, whether they performed well, just well enough, neutral, or they actually did some harm; this is sort of the summary that we would be showing, and we've asked that a technical review be done by next Wednesday so that we can keep moving forward for the next set of meetings.

Haugen said that the next few slides are just some of the things that we are trying to communicate, that we have been trying to communicate, and will keep trying to communicate and that is when we talk about these two bridge options we keep referring back to the Point Bridge as the local example of what we are trying to achieve; so it is a two lane roadway connecting primarily neighborhood to neighborhood, serving local traffic versus trying to serve regional traffic. He stated that the Point Bridge is signed for no trucks on the North Dakota side, we are assuming it will also be signed no trucks. He added that it will have bike/pedestrian trail on the bridge, it will have the Greenway pathway connected, most likely underneath the bridge; as a way to conceptualize how we will maintain the trail system; the flood closure system will not need anything drastically, something already exists at one location. Haugen referred to a slide showing a conceptual drawing of how the bridge could look at Elks Drive and went over it briefly explaining that the important thing for Elks and 32<sup>nd</sup> is that you might see light standards, but the one thing that isn't similar with the Point Bridge is that it will not have an arch, it will be a fairly flat structure. He stated that they will show some of those perspectives, when you are on Belmont or in a home what you can see above the dike system is pretty much what you will see with the bridge that exists there as well.

Vein commented that curves on bridges are not good. He said that even if you don't have the slope up and down, which makes it worse; are you anticipating, maybe we are getting into too

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much detail at this point but will there be a curve on this bridge. Haugen responded that that is too much detail at this point. He stated that what you see here is based on, again, the hydraulic report and they replicated the drawing that they put across for that, but to your point we probably could adjust the bridge so that it is straight. He added that on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, where it would penetrate the flood wall, they aren't showing a location yet, so again, for lack of a better phrase, we could dummy it back to just show; the main thing they are trying to convey is that you aren't seeing, again, this big super structure over the dike system, and that is something that we've heard a lot of, what is it going to look like.

Haugen said that that is pretty much where we are at, again they are asking for the technical staff to look at all of this information, and whether we are putting a ranking to each one of them, or not, and then we are all going to be further rendering some of these concepts of what the bridge might look like at Elks and at 32<sup>nd</sup>, what both sides of the river will look like, and then we will have some very generalized concepts of the first intersections that are at touching points, so you will see Elks, 24<sup>th</sup> kind of how a double traffic signal would be set up, how 32<sup>nd</sup> and Belmont would be, and then on Rhinehart Drive intersections, but again very generalized concepts, nothing that shows this at all based on any of the local design issues at these particular spots.

Haugen stated that we hope to start having the Ad Hoc Group and the general public engaged in the December timeframe, and then in January, now with the amendment, to wrap up and have a conclusion to the study done.

Vein asked how many Ad Hoc meetings there have been and has that interaction gone well or have they raised any major concerns that we need to present to that group. Haugen responded that he believes we have had four or five Ad Hoc meetings; and along with characterizes like getting into a lot of the information, a lot of the neighborhoods and people representing the Chamber of Commerce, the school district, township on the Minnesota side, others with a stronger understanding of what happens under the do-nothing, and then now we are starting to see a stronger understanding of what is the unique differences between an Elks local versus a 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue location and they understand that while Elks is less costly it also has a more of a negative impact on more properties as 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue does. He said that that is what they have been getting from the Ad Hoc group; the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue representative has been asking a lot of questions, getting into the details and while it may not be what they hope to see as a neighborhood, but it is something that they have a better understanding now of what it is and why it seems like 32<sup>nd</sup> is shining a bit more than the other location.

Powers asked who the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue representative is. Haugen responded that his name is Eric Hanson, and the Councilman is Kyle Kvamme. Vein asked if they were meeting with any of the constituents separately. Haugen responded that they were. He said that theirs is a pretty active group, keeping on top of things. Haugen reported that just on our website we have over 8,000 unique users that have been reading the site for the study, which is beyond any of the other studies that we have ever done. He added that downloads of the documents are over 500, not only are people looking at the website a number of them are downloading the documents to get a better understanding.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE 2050 EAST GRAND FORKS LAND USE PLAN**

Kouba reported that we started this project last year and we have gone through all of the tasks that were needed to complete this project, including gathering data, holding meetings, etc. She added that they have presenting and updating various groups including the Planning Commission, Economic Development, and the City Council throughout the process.

Kouba stated that they presented this final draft to the City Council at their meeting last night, and they did approve adopting the final plan so right now we are looking for approval from the Board as well.

Kouba said that, just to give a quick overview there are six structures; the first is Community Background which includes population and how that population is in the bulk of the City, household incomes and where jobs are coming and going and where people are coming and going so that we know of any opportunities or concerns that we might have so we can bring them forward in the plan.

Kouba stated that we've got public involvement. She explained that in the beginning we asked for and got a good result from asking people what they are seeing and what they want to see for the future of the city. She said that they asked what are your priorities for the city and they did a survey and had Wiki-Map on the website for people to provide input. She added that they also held virtual open houses in the beginning and again at the end of the process and made them available on the website as well.

Kouba said that they also went in and reviewed the goals and polices; they organized them by topics. She stated that the first one was housing and residential and the goal is to promote the development and expansion of neighborhoods; the second is economic development and it has to different specific goals to encourage more general economic development and more downtown development as well, helping to support those goals and to encourage outworking with Economic Development in the planning process; the third is urban expansion and as some in East Grand Forks know they are already trying to annex some areas into the City so we wanted to make sure there are goals to do that in an orderly fashion; the fourth is parks recreation and open spaces that make for livable communities, people connecting in other ways than work, so we want to make sure there are opportunities throughout the community and that we plan for land use as well as land development; and the fifth is transportation, which is the great connector, whether it is vehicles for your roads that are being built in certain areas or making sure there are bike and pedestrian access in developments, and just planning for the general growth of the community itself.

Kouba stated that the next section is the Future Land Use. She said that they have taken the 2045 land uses that were established and introduced two new mixed types of uses which are commercial/industrial and commercial/residential. She added that in order to develop kind of the idea of how much growth we are going to be estimating they used the 2020 population data and used our 2015 traffic analysis zones as to how much population is in each area. She said that it is

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an MPO wide data point, but it does get individual cities pretty accurately, and then they were able, from there, to get an idea of how many acres each type of land use is in there.

Kouba commented that the biggest difference between the 2045 and the 2050 land use is mostly that we did not show what was not needed by 2050; in 2045 we had gotten into beyond 2045 and this one is showing what we are just accounting for by 2050 instead of beyond so you will see some areas that aren't showing up; there are some residential on the northeast side of town that is no longer being shown in the 2050 plan, not that it couldn't happen but we just don't see it happening by 2050.

Kouba stated that they also planned on that phasing once again, they have been talking about this and this is the draft phasing that was presented to the public as well as the City Council and the Planning Commission. She said that it basically showed the near-term, mid-term, long-term, and what would be a more future expansion area that would give a little more flexibility for businesses as well as developers who want to develop close to the city or within the city.

Kouba said that they also did some development review to allow for developers and other businesses to know kind of how the process works when developing so we want to make sure they know we are looking at other plans and standards and also at how FHWA has made some statements as well as NACTO, which is a more urbanized area guideline, as well as parking and crossing into the future. She stated that it is hard to visualize some of those concepts, some of those ideas that are presented in those documents; they included the 2045 area concept plans that were in the 2045 Land Use Plan, that way it allows for people to see, hey this is how commercial/industrial and commercial/residential works. She said that right next to the urban areas are the residential areas and some of those high-density areas working with single family areas and how those concepts can work with biking and walking and transit, as well as roads.

Kouba commented that quickly, what we call implementation, which is basically a matrix taking these goals and putting forward some action points so that we can know what is going to be a long-term action, an on-going action and a short-term action, as well as knowing who we are working with in order to make these goals work.

Kouba stated that between the draft plan and the final plan that we are presenting today, the only things that really changed were kind of that we had a request from the City Council to take a closer look at some of those phasing points and make sure some of that growth that is being presented to the City Council is represented in that phasing growth.

Strandell asked if we take action on this, do we have some authority to implement it. Haugen responded that with all of our studies we are asked to at least approve them so that we justify the use of the federal involvement, so we aren't asking you to adopt, we are asking you to approve the document so that we can release the contract and retainage.

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY VETTER, TO APPROVE THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE 2050 LAND USE PLAN, AS PRESENTED.***

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

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE 2022 MINNESOTA STATE CONTRACT**

Haugen reported that every year on the Minnesota side about this time we need to execute a new contract with the State of Minnesota. He said that the dollar amount in the contract hasn't changed, it is roughly \$11,000 that we receive from the State every year, and we can use that as necessary match against the federal amounts, which is what we use it for, so we do need to have formal Board action authorizing the Chair and Executive Director to execute the contract.

***MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY POWERS TO APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE CHAIR AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN AND EXECUTE THE 2022 MINNESOTA STATE CONTRACT, AS PRESENTED.***

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

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF TRANSIT SAFETY TARGETS**

Haugen reported that of all of the performance measures and targets, this is the last one that we are asking the Board to take action on.

Haugen stated that Transit Safety is similar in some ways to Highway Safety but there are some differences. He explained that when it comes to a bi-state MPO, on the highway side there were all sorts of actions available to adopt including adopting either State, adopting one State, etc., under the Transit Safety the real preference was for the local transit operators to establish targets, and not have State targets established and in the State of Minnesota that is happening with the exception of East Grand Forks. He said that on the North Dakota side, because they are not set up the same as Minnesota, they did adopt a Statewide Transit Safety Plan and Transit Safety Targets. He stated that local Transit Operators did have something adopted and it was submitted to FTA and did receive some level of approval from FTA at one time however under further review their safety targets were not using the right measures and were not identifying proper targets.

Haugen commented that when we adopted the TIP in August, one of the conditions we received on adoption of it was that we would have to adopt Transit Safety Targets. He said that we agreed with our FTA office that we knew in November that we were doing a lot of amendments to the TIP, the next agenda item is that item, so that we would address this Transit Safety by November, but in the end what we have discovered, and what we are recommending to the Board is the only Safety Targets that are available for us to consider adopting at this time are those that



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were adopted by the State of North Dakota therefore we are asking the Board to adopt those same targets for the MPO area, and it would be the North Dakota targets, also the MPO area in Minnesota. He said, again, MnDOT and FTA are fine that we aren't addressing any of the Minnesota side targets or issues, simply because one Minnesota doesn't have statewide safety targets and two, under the Transit Asset Management, East Grand Forks was allowed to piggy-back on the North Dakota State Transit Asset Management Plan; so they already set a precedent of East Grand Forks being part of the North Dakota State-wide Plan effort.

Haugen referred to information in the packet and stated that it lists the individual targets. He said that for the seven measures the language lingo is "by mode", which is for the separated fixed route versus for the non-response services. He added that fortunately in North Dakota and also in our local area, we've not had any transit related fatalities.

Haugen said that, again, these are the targets that we would be asking the Board to adopt. He added that these targets will be effective until we update our Transit Development Plan that is currently on-going, but for the MPO, we adopt a target that is for a longer period of time, the State of North Dakota in this case, annually, will have to review these targets and make a decision on whether to amend their targets or not, but we aren't technically asked to review our targets every year, so these would have been a five year target but since we are right now a quarter of the way in to the Transit Development Plan update these will only be in place about two years.

***MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY ROST TO APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE TRANSIT SAFETY TARGETS, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Mock and DeMers.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2022-2025 T.I.P. AMENDMENTS**

Haugen reported that we are continuing the Public Hearing; the Technical Advisory Committee had it scheduled for their meeting last week, but we have a 10-day prior requirement and between that ten day time period the NDDOT requested some further amendments to the document and we thought the best way to handle this in a timely fashion was to have the Technical Advisory Committee continue that public hearing to this meeting, so the first action is to see if there is anyone here from the public that wishes to comment on this item.

There was no one present that wished to speak on this item. Haugen commented that they did not receive any written or oral comments prior to this meeting.

Haugen explained that what they are doing, and we identified it when we approved the T.I.P. back in August, that, particularly for these phasing, and on the North Dakota side, because they use federal funds for preliminary engineering, right-of-way purchase and utilities, that we are

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required now to show every year an estimate of what these phases of project development will be cost wise. He said that they are not identifying specific projects, they are just identifying a general phase of total projects.

Haugen said that when they initially published the public notice and proposed T.I.P. amendments, this was going to be all zeros, in this particular year 2022; what is happening is the NDDOT asked us to add a million dollars for preliminary engineering, and then that split out 80%/10%/10% roughly. He added that the two projects that are in our current T.I.P. that they are now asking for project development to start earlier are the Regional Traffic Signal Rehabilitation Project, and he believes that is pending in 2024; and the other project is the Pavement Treatment on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that is programmed in 2025, so they are identifying now that they want to get those projects shovel ready quicker than our current T.I.P. timeline so they are asking that we approve an amendment that shows a million dollars of cost estimate towards, particularly those two projects for preliminary engineering.

Haugen stated that in other out-years you will see that in some years we have identified some preliminary engineering on projects, but a lot of these cells are showing zero for right-of-way and utilities at this point, and now in 2025 we are actually showing no costs for these activities.

Haugen commented that some of the other amendments we discussed, again, back when we were approving the T.I.P.; for the mobility manager position for Cities Area Transit, they had gotten partial funding approval and that was because they had some extra funds that they programmed earlier this year and then now we are getting complete coverage of a request for the position's total cost so we are amending to reflect the additional \$25,000 in federal funds. He stated that there is a little minor amendment to add a project to change the lighting on the interchange to LED. He said that originally it was identified that it was the high-mast lighting structures but now it does not include the high-mast and is a \$10,000 project cost.

Haugen stated that there is another bigger project that is high tension median cable guardrail that covers the area between Fargo and Grand Forks districts, so it actually extends further south to Fargo, and it extends further north of Grand Forks, so the big number is about \$4.5 million total, and normally we would calculate out that portion that is in the MPO area and make a note of what that is but for this project we decided that that was not necessary.

Haugen said that the last project is kind of continuing on the East Grand Forks, what to use the 2022 dollars, and as you have been informed we are swapping with Polk County, and our T.I.P. needs to reflect now that we are not using 2022 dollars, that we are using 2023 dollars because we still don't have a different project and we are just continuing the current project in the T.I.P. so we are just extending out that one year.

Anderson asked if she could ask a question; she said that there was discussion on joint switching out to another project, do we know when that will be decided. Haugen responded that it will be decided in the next eight months, but beyond that he doesn't have a timeline. Anderson stated that she knows that they are talking about doing a study on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Vetter responded that the city hasn't started anything on that he doesn't think. Anderson asked if the city needs to start

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something. Vetter responded that they do if they want to change it to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Anderson commented that she hasn't been to any of those meetings, but as a budget person she kind of needs to know what kind of dollars they would need to match the federal portion. Haugen commented that this is sort of the red tape maneuver we have to do in order to let these funds be available in 2023, and that is all we are doing, we aren't making any other changes except for converting from 2022 dollars to 2023 dollars.

Haugen said that both the Technical Advisory Committee and the staff are recommending adoption of the amendments.

***MOVED BY VEIN, SECONDED BY POWERS TO APPROVE ADOPTING THE FY2022 T.I.P. AMENDMENTS, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Mock and DeMers.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

A. Letter From The Chamber

Haugen reported that we placed this item under public comment. He said that the MPO did receive a letter from the Chamber, a copy was included in the packet, and it was asking the MPO to be aware of, and to start trying to advance some of those major infrastructure projects that have been on our scope, some for decades.

Vetter asked what actually the MPO do to further any of these projects along. Haugen responded that right now, with the infrastructure bill there is more money coming in. He said that a lot of that money is pigeon-holed into the current programs and formula distribution, so there will be a lot of dollars coming in, but it will go through the same processes that have been there in the past, unless each State decides to create a whole different system. He added that there are a lot of discretionary programs out there that added billions of dollars, with national competition, and some of those is where these might compete for, so the short answer is the information is still too new and raw to understand how exactly to approach getting them funded.

Vetter stated that some of the discussion that went on at the meeting that we have to have shovel ready projects. He said that we would stand a better chance than to be able to get any of these federal dollars that are coming down, so in light of becoming "shovel ready" is that more of a function of the Cities and Counties than the MPO. Haugen responded that it is. He explained that it is a project development process. He added that two ways to answer that; the last action you took we added a million dollars for preliminary engineering on the North Dakota side, that was for projects that are currently in the T.I.P. that would be moved up to happen quicker, so that tells him that North Dakota thought is that to spend the first new money that is coming to them through this new bill and distribution is that they will take currently programmed projects and

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just accelerate them up so now we have projects in 2025, more money in 2025, that we will have to start filling in and then we will keep going to 2026, 2027, etc., so that buys us some time now, 12 months or whatever to figure out how all this new system is going to flow, so that is the initial answer and the second answer is, again, the best example would be the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Grade Separation, the City of Grand Forks has gone through up to about the signature point of Federal Highway saying that they agree with the findings, they have gone through that as 100% local cost of project development to get it as close to shovel ready as we can without having federal involvement with the financing of it. He added, then, that the process is outside of the fiscal constraints struggle that we have with trying to get these mega projects financed or shovel ready.

Anderson said that one of the examples they talked about at the meeting was the Merrifield Bridge; that there was some deadline in December for North Dakota State, that North Dakota would give “x” amount of dollars to this project, but there is a deadline to have it in by the beginning of December, so her concern and why she is here today is because she knows that Polk County has ARCA dollars and she heard that they are already committing \$1.2 to Climax, and that they asked other Cities in Polk County how much they wanted, and they hadn’t gotten that far so she said that we will take as much as we can get because she can find a project. She stated that she thinks that the money for Climax would be for a bridge. Strandell responded that it is for a water distribution project.

Anderson stated that she guesses we are here looking at; so could we look at trying to get the Merrifield Bridge shovel ready and look at what Polk County could match that with, maybe some American Rescue Plan dollars, and that we can already get that into the grouping, or if it is shovel ready then we can get those other projects that Mr. Vetter was talking about for the Infrastructure Bill, and that would be the same thing for the neighborhood bridge. Vetter responded that, again, at the meeting, discussing it you’ve got infrastructure that is unique to the Cities and you’ve got infrastructure that is unique to the Counties and the discussion was, what needs to happen is the Cities need to get together and say, for an intercity bridge, if we each agree to both pony up a million dollars to start doing some of these studies to get it shovel ready, great, and if the Counties each want to pony up a million dollars to get the Merrifield Bridge shovel ready, great, but consensus at the meeting seemed to be that we aren’t going to pick one bridge, we are going to go for both bridges, and the Cities need to pony up and the Counties need to pony up.

Anderson said that she knows that Mr. Wilfahrt is already looking at trying to put a meeting together, like December 2<sup>nd</sup>, to try to get everybody at the table, so you would have Grand Forks County, Polk County, both Cities there so we can see how to move forward on that, and so she just wanted to be here so you are aware of that. She added that she hates to say there is an urgency with this, but there is, and she is here personally just to see what she can do to help the group to help move that forward, and she thought Mr. Wilfahrt would be here today, and they will be checking on your calendars to see if you can make it to the meeting, and again, he is going to try to get a meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Chamber.

Vetter commented that from an MPO standpoint, because he has his MPO hat on now, we take direction from the Cities, and that is why he asked Mr. Haugen those questions, there isn’t a lot

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that the MPO can do at this point to get shovel ready projects, it has to come from the Cities and the Counties. Anderson said that she guesses that maybe that is because some of the people at this table will be the same people at the other table, so she is just making you aware that that meeting will be scheduled, most likely on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at noon, so if you can check your calendars to see if you are available.

Haugen stated that the placement of the Thompson Bridge is another example; Polk County did the, he doesn't know if Grand Forks County actually participated, but they did a lot of the project shovel ready work ahead of time and when they got Minnesota bonding and then when the stimulus package came through in 2009, that was when North Dakota said, okay you have a shovel ready project and Minnesota has already committed to half of it, so they twisted arms in Bismarck to get the other half, but again, the local jurisdiction did a lot of the project shovel ready early work on their dime.

Murphy said that he knows one of the other things that was talked about at that meeting was what role the MPO could play, and if they could possibly help to coordinate some of this; there was some discussion from the Chamber on this and how they could help coordinate some of it. He added that he was contacted by Curt Krueen, and he knows that he wants to have a meeting with his counterparts on the Minnesota side. He said that there is a deadline on their side, on the Minnesota side, so that we don't miss this because he doesn't think that they will have the opportunity to have this much available again any time soon, definitely not in his lifetime, maybe not yours either, so he wants to act on that as soon as possible.

Powers asked what action has been taken to contact our elected officials. Strandell responded that he doesn't know if any action has been taken. Powers asked who does it. Strandell responded that in Polk County's case he would imagine that Rich Sanders would take the lead, he is very good at that, so they should make sure that he is invited to this next meeting. Anderson responded that she knows that Mr. Wilfahrt has talked about getting them to the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting. Vetter commented that there hasn't been any discussion with any of the State Legislature. Haugen responded that there was communication with the reauthorization request, those were all formally submitted as we know the republican side didn't sponsor any earmarks. He added that the reauthorization of transportation, which is couched in the Infrastructure Bill, didn't have any earmarked program, so there were communications with all of the delegations for these projects, as earmarks. He commented that, again, there was authorization opportunity, and then each year there are appropriations opportunity, under the Appropriation Bill Minnesota's Senators did earmark funds for the City of Moorhead for a railroad underpass, it isn't a large amount, and then for Thief River Falls they earmarked several million dollars for runway work. Anderson stated that she will make sure that Mr. Wilfahrt gets the contact information for the Minnesota Legislators and the Feds too because she knows that other times they had meetings, that somebody comes from their office anyway.

Vein asked if you looked at these four projects, how much would you estimate their costs off the top of your head, over \$100 million. Haugen asked if the four projects he was referring to be the two bridges, the interchange and the grade separation. Vein responded that was correct. Haugen said that you are getting close to \$200 million. Vein said, then, that that \$200 million was all,

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and if Grand Forks were one community, all the other communities will be requesting these funds too; and let's say in North Dakota we had a little over a billion dollars in ARCA funds this last time around and we had \$9 billion dollars in requests, so there is only a limited pot of money available no matter how many projects we have to do, and so it seems to him that we should make sure that we have money to do the preliminary engineering we are talking about for the ones that are really going to happen, and not necessarily to do them all because we can't get them all, so shouldn't we try to figure out, and this is where he does think the MPO does come into play, is going to be prioritizing projects, or is he wrong.

Vein said that he sees this as interesting, it is a great letter, it is probably needed, but if we are going to really be efficient with what we are trying to do, we've got to figure out what we are going to do and make sure we are going full speed ahead to get it done. He stated that we have all identified different bridges, our long range transportation plan he believes has looked at a number of the bridges as options and there is a level of prioritization there; we are doing the work, he believes, at the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue Interchange on some of the environmental, so we are doing that to get it shovel ready and we've been working on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Underpass to get that closer to shovel ready, and we are actually doing work on the neighborhood bridge, which is what we are doing today to get that shovel ready, and the Merrifield Bridge has been around for a long time, but what does it take to get the ones we want to do, the highest priority, closer to being ready to be able to go, and, again he is thinking that is probably going to fall a lot on the shoulders of the MPO. Haugen responded that of the four projects the 42<sup>nd</sup> Grade Separation is the closest, it has always been the closest because it has almost got the signature of the NEPA document. He said that the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue Interchange or the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Congestion Relief project does have a consultant selected, but he doesn't know if they have finalized the scope of work and signed the contract yet, but that is where that is at. He stated that both Merrifield and now the Intracity Bridge; Merrifield had a feasibility report done ten-plus years ago and that has been sitting there but it needs to have more of that same NEPA documentation done. Vein agreed, adding that a NEPA only lasts so long, six months to a year, and then you've got to go back into those things if we are going to do it, but again. Haugen said, then, for the Intracity ones, again, with the study that we are doing now the MPO is probably taking to the last stage that we can spend money on it and the next MPO action would be to prioritize it over other funding because of that fiscal constraint issue. Vein explained that what he is trying to get to is that we start looking at this priorities, he thinks that is the only reasonable thing to do to keep it moving forward and not miss out on funding.

Haugen commented that with all this new funding coming in it still requires a match so you have to make sure you have the ability to provide that match, and we are talking multi-million-dollar projects so it will need multi-million-dollar local match available to it. He added that he did send an email out yesterday; one of the nuances of all of this money, besides it being already funded through the formulas that are in place is that the federal administration has placed emphasis that up to 40% of these funds be targeted for specific geographies, and in our area there are five of them, and that geography is likely going to change every year because of the data they are using to identify it.

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Vein said that another thing he would like to mention is the issue of building this new plant in Grand Forks and the transportation impacts that is going to have on the street and highway system, and that will include additional trains crossing Highway 2, what impact will that have on our transportation system and when will we have to look at an underpass or whatever there that we have had discussions in the past on, and so what are those impacts going to be, what is the impact going to be on 32<sup>nd</sup> for instance; because there are side effects, you can correct one or two intersections on Gateway Drive and Interstate to get trucks in but as you just said for every truck you get in you have to get it back out again so you take all that traffic and you about double it, and then with train traffic; the concept of what we are doing is great, the reality of the impacts is something we can't ignore, we should be informed and aware of what those are, because that could impact even any one of these projects, it could become something that's significant for where our priorities are, so he sees the opportunity, but he is surprised that that happened so fast, that it is going to be under construction in less than six months and that is hardly any time to react or be prepared. He commented that he thinks the MPO has to have awareness of all of this and start trying to figure out how we can be caught up or maybe be ahead of it, but it is probably happening too fast.

Anderson said we need to try to be proactive. Vein responded that that is what we need to do until we know how to get that into our work plan, or whatever we plan to do, but all of those things are real. He added that he doesn't think the shotgun approach that we talked about is going to happen, we aren't going to get four projects. He said that his guess, because we tried to get one through the ARCA funds in North Dakota, that we may get one and potentially two, that would just be his guess. Anderson stated that she thinks what they are thinking, kind of like with the State of Minnesota; they got a huge grant for the interconnect because of us working together and it was benefiting two states, and she thinks that is kind of what why we would push for them because it isn't just benefitting one state, it is benefitting two and they splitting the cost; it is working together.

Murphy commented that what he is hearing from their leaders is that they do think it is extremely likely that the state would come up with a funded project. Haugen said you are talking specifically about a bridge. Murphy responded he is talking about two bridges, not just one; they said they would probably be very receptive of this. Vein said that we still need to have the local match however we do that too, we could get the funding and that has to compete, and we in Grand Forks have identified that we need \$100 million dollars in infrastructure for the new plant, so some of that will be special assessed, and some will already come from state funds, but the range was right around \$100 million dollars, and we have to be realistic, where are we going to get it. Anderson responded that in Minnesota a lot of it would come from State Legislature, but she doesn't know if that is how North Dakota works too, but if you brought in a big business like that State of Minnesota would provide infrastructure at least in the area, but like you said it is a bigger problem it's not just in that section. Vein said that they have the issue, and he thinks one of the advantages is getting a natural gas pipeline, that is a huge benefit to us which could lead to more happening. He added that for him personally, and he is looking for water capacity, we will need raw water capacity to do this project, it is doubling the amount of water Grand Forks is using, and we knew what it was like this summer, which was just the first of many, how are we going to do that. He said that for them, and we work with you guys, the Red River Water Supply

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is the answer to being able to do that, but that is the 1.5 billion dollar project to get water, and we are looking at what our cost share is for that project also, and in some ways because of the relationship we have with East Grand Forks we are covered, so this is a huge issue and somehow how we get our arms around that is all he is asking. Anderson stated that if there is anything East Grand Forks City can help you with just let them know because they are willing to move forward because if you bring a big business into Grand Forks obviously it affects us too because we have the same water source.

Strandell asked where we go from here. Vein said he would turn it over to Mr. Haugen and say, bring us a plan, lets figure out how we are going to do this. Haugen responded that you are already taking the necessary steps, come January or prior to January you can take the intercity bridge and start processing it, you've got enough information to identify which bridge location; Merrifield, it is the counties perview so push the County to take it to the next step like they did with the Thompson Bridge replacement.

Strandell said that from the Chamber letter he is getting the impression that the reason the Merrifield Bridge was selected or brought forth was because it probably has the least opposition, it may not be the favorite bridge, but there isn't any opposition. Rost stated that there is a lot of support from the NDDOT on the Merrifield Bridge according to Curt Kreun. Anderson agreed, adding that they were told that if you want the bridge, you have it in by December 8<sup>th</sup> or something and North Dakota will give you the money, that is what they heard. Rost said that they will do the interchange at I-29 at the same time. Anderson said that that is why there is such a big urgency, along with the ARCA dollars. Rost stated that he thinks Mr. Kreun had conversation with Kelly Armstrong over this as well. Haugen commented that one thing the State Legislature did do was to allocate a lot of dollars to county bridges, and that might not be for new bridges, but it could shift some of your funds towards a new bridge.

Powers asked who makes the request to move forward on this. Haugen responded that it comes from the local jurisdictions, so he isn't sure what deadline is being mentioned here of December 8<sup>th</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>. Anderson responded that the meeting is on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and she knows they said that the deadline for North Dakota was somewhere at the beginning of December and she thinks it is the 8<sup>th</sup>, but what she got from the meeting was that Grand Forks, and their group and the Grand Forks County Engineer were going to try to figure out the price for Merrifield, that was her understanding, but since Mr. Wilfahrt isn't here she can't speak for him. Vein said that he might be wrong, but he is still thinking that a lot of that prioritization does have to come back to the MPO, so they can make recommendations, but he thinks the MPO is the one who is going to have to get on board and determine how to prioritize that. He said that we have had those conflicts before between the two cities, but the MPO needs to prioritize. Anderson stated that maybe Mr. Wilfahrt will ask if you can have a special meeting, if that is what we need to get it to North Dakota, she doesn't know what the rules are, but maybe just to put you on alert that you might have to do a special meeting in December just to move forward with some things. Vein added that maybe there is something that can happen either legislatively or through the Governor's office or through the DOT Director, because each one of those have a say, but he knows that the current ARCA funds in North Dakota that was going through, some of that is specifically designated, some of it is up to the Director, and he isn't sure what political clout the



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Governor may have, and he isn't sure what our Congressional Delegation has except to do an earmark. He said that obviously if they can earmark a bridge, that is different, if Kelly Armstrong can say, or even when Curt Kreun can say, unless the legislature has acted on it, but the legislature, as far as he can see has billions of dollars in requests. Anderson said that that is why they talk about shovel ready projects; if you are far enough along you get the lucky draw because you are further along than somebody that is just starting to get a project started. Vein stated, though, that none of the projects are shovel ready, but some are closer. Anderson agreed, adding that she is just saying that we are probably closer than other places even in the United States.

Murphy said, going back to the Merrifield Bridge, since we have representatives from both counties here, what is the position of the counties on Merrifield, as far coming up with the local match on that. Strandell responded that they never talked about a local match, how much money that would be. Rost said that Grand Forks County hasn't talked about that either. He added that he just had conversations with Curt Kreun last Friday, but he came back from Bismarck with all this information that the DOT is on board with this Merrifield Bridge and really wants to support it, and that would include the interchange on I-29, and he is looking for support so maybe that Chamber meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December. He said that he has also talked with Nick West, Grand Forks County Engineer, and he has copies of the information too. Murphy asked if Mr. Rost sees Grand Forks County supporting it. Rost responded that, as Mr. Vein says, they need to look at funding, where do they get the money. Grasser commented that at this point we don't even know what it is going to cost. Anderson stated that she knows that they got lucky that the City of East Grand Forks is actually planning for an EDA Tourism Grant, and that is because they were far enough along in it that they actually got called and were told that they want outdoor projects that supports tourism, so they are a part of the Federal Section 8 that were applying for that just because they are close enough where they can get something together, of course they are going to have to write the grant very quickly but, and that was a competitive one so, as you said, there are a lot of different pots and she guesses we just have to dig and find one or two and see if it works.

Strandell said that he will ask again, where do we go from here. Haugen responded that he would follow up with Mr. Wilfahrt and with NDDOT on the deadline for the Merrifield Bridge. Murphy commented that he texted Mr. Wilfahrt and he is home waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test. Anderson commented that the other thing is, she knows, bring it back to the county boards and tell them we are discussing this and tell them we are going to meet on it. Strandell said that the County Board will meet on Tuesday. Anderson said that she will have the information on the meeting before that. She asked if Mr. Rost would take it back to the Grand Forks County Board as well. Rost responded that the County Board met last night and talked about the Chamber letter, and Nick West was there, so they briefly talked about it then, so they are aware.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

A. 2021 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that this is our monthly one-page report shows the updated activities for each of the agenda items.

B. Approval Of Bill/Check List For 10/16/21 to 11/12/21 Period

***MOVED BY VEIN, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE THE BILLS/CHECKS FOR THE 10/16/21 TO 11/12/21 PERIOD.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**ADJOURNMENT**

***STRANDELL DECLARED THE NOVEMBER 17, 2021, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD ADJOURNED AT 1:20 P.M.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy McNelis, Office Manager

**Grand Forks East Grand Forks MPO**  
**Transaction List by Vendor**  
**October 16 through November 12, 2021**

Type	Date	Num	Memo	Account	Clr	Split	Amount
<b>AFLAC.</b>							
Liability Check	10/29/2021	AFLAC	501	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-776.85
<b>Alerus Financial</b>							
Liability Check	10/29/2021	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-2,611.10
Liability Check	11/12/2021	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-2,569.14
<b>Alliant Engineering</b>							
Bill	10/26/2021	Inv. #...	Work On Futu...	206 · Accounts Pay...		565 · Special ...	-2,518.56
Bill Pmt -Check	10/26/2021	7131	Work On Futu...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-2,518.56
<b>Business Essentials</b>							
Bill	10/28/2021	Inv. #...	Office Supplie...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-47.18
Bill Pmt -Check	10/28/2021	7134	Office Supplie...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-47.18
<b>CitiBusiness Card</b>							
Bill	10/26/2021	Acct #...	Charges For ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-64.32
Bill Pmt -Check	10/26/2021	7132	Charges For ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-64.32
<b>City of East Grand Forks</b>							
Bill	10/19/2021	Inv #0...	2021 4th Qua...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-2,513.58
Bill Pmt -Check	10/19/2021	7124	2021 4th Qua...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-2,513.58
<b>East Grand Forks Water and Light</b>							
Bill	10/20/2021	Inv. # ...	3rd Quarter 2...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-626.45
Bill Pmt -Check	10/20/2021	7126	3rd Quarter 2...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-626.45
<b>Fidelity Security Life.</b>							
Liability Check	10/22/2021	Avesis	50790-1043	104 · Checking	X	210 · Payroll Li...	-8.44
<b>Forum Communications Company</b>							
Bill	11/09/2021	Inv. #...	Public Hearin...	206 · Accounts Pay...		545 · Transpor...	-383.62
Bill Pmt -Check	11/09/2021	7135	Public Hearin...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-383.62
<b>Intrado Interactive Services Corporation</b>							
Bill	11/09/2021	Inv. #...	Annual MPO ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		525 · Citizens ...	-4,260.00
Bill Pmt -Check	11/09/2021	7137	Annual MPO ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-4,260.00
<b>Kimley-Horn And Associates, Inc.</b>							
Bill	10/19/2021	Inv. #...	Work On TDP...	206 · Accounts Pay...		548 · EGF FT...	-4,812.53
Bill Pmt -Check	10/19/2021	7125	Work On TDP...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-4,812.53
<b>Madison Nat'l Life</b>							
Liability Check	10/22/2021	7128		104 · Checking	X	215 · Disability...	-67.34
<b>Mike's</b>							
Bill	10/20/2021		MPO Lunche...	206 · Accounts Pay...		711 · Miscellan...	-93.00
Bill Pmt -Check	10/20/2021	7127	MPO Lunche...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-93.00
<b>Minnesota Department of Revenue</b>							
Liability Check	10/29/2021	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking		210 · Payroll Li...	-208.00
Liability Check	11/12/2021	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking		210 · Payroll Li...	-200.00
<b>Minnesota Life Insurance Company</b>							
Liability Check	10/25/2021	7130		104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-111.72
<b>Nationwide Retirement Solutions</b>							
Liability Check	10/29/2021	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-495.89
Liability Check	11/12/2021	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-495.89
<b>NDPERS</b>							
Liability Check	10/29/2021	NDPE...	D88	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-4,588.92
Liability Check	11/12/2021	NDPE...		104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-2,535.92
<b>QuickBooks Payroll Service</b>							
Liability Check	10/28/2021		Created by P...	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-6,527.46
Liability Check	11/09/2021		Created by P...	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-6,383.62
<b>SRF Consulting Group, Inc.</b>							
Bill	11/09/2021	Inv. #...	Work on GF 2...	206 · Accounts Pay...		560 · Land Us...	-3,349.69
Bill Pmt -Check	11/09/2021	7138	Work on GF 2...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-3,349.69
<b>Standard Insurance Company</b>							
Liability Check	10/22/2021	7129		104 · Checking		217 · Dental P...	-118.88
<b>The Exponent</b>							
Bill	10/28/2021	Inv. #...		206 · Accounts Pay...		560 · Land Us...	-217.40
Bill Pmt -Check	10/28/2021	7133		104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-217.40
Bill	11/09/2021	Inv. #...	Public Notice ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		545 · Transpor...	-130.50
Bill Pmt -Check	11/09/2021	7136	Public Notice ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-130.50