

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 13th, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Teri Kouba, Chairman, called the April 13th, 2022, meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee to order at 1:31 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present via Zoom: Wayne Zacher, NDDOT-Local Planning; David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering, Stephanie Halford, Grand Forks Planning; Jason Peterson, NDDOT-Local District; George Palo, NDDOT-Local District; Rich Sanders, Polk County Engineer; Nancy Ellis, East Grand Forks Planning; Jon Mason, MnDOT-District 2; Ryan Riesinger, Airport Authority; and Steve Emery, East Grand Forks Engineering.

Absent: Brad Bail, Jane Williams, Ryan Brooks, Michael Johnson, Lane Magnuson, Nels Christianson, Dale Bergman, Nick West, and Patrick Hopkins.

Guest(s) present: Kristen Sperry, FHWA-ND; Anna Pierce, MnDOT-Central Office; Scott Harmstead, SRF Consulting; and Jacob Snyder, Polk County Environmental Services Planning And Zoning.

Staff: Teri Kouba, GF/EGF MPO Interim Executive Director and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Office Manager.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Kouba declared a quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 9, 2022, MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOVED BY KUHARENKO, SECONDED BY SANDERS, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9TH, 2022 MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF DRAFT MINNESOTA SIDE 2023-2026 TIP

Kouba reported that a public hearing was scheduled for today's meeting. She stated that comments were received until noon today and none were submitted either written or orally, and if there is no one here today to speak on this item she will close the public hearing.

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Kouba explained that this is just the Minnesota side; and we are mostly looking at the various work that is going to be done in 2023 to 2026 for Minnesota.

Kouba referred to the tables included in the packet and said that there some changes needed to our current document. She explained that there are some slight differences in the amounts that the State had versus the TIP.

Kouba reported that she met with Mr. Mason and others from Minnesota this morning to make sure that our TIP and the Minnesota STIP match. She pointed out that the only other changes were the Rehab of the Point Bridge project and the operation and purchase of a bus for Transit in 2026.

Kouba stated that staff is looking for a recommendation to the MPO Executive Policy Board to approve the Minnesota Side TIP, with the updated numbers.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY KUHARENKO, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE FY2023-2026 TIP WITH THE CHANGES AND UPDATED TIP NUMBERS, AS DISCUSSED.

Sanders said the one question he has for the City is that they still show the roundabout at Rhinehart and Bygland, is that still the intention or are they putting in a different project in that location. Emery responded that the intention is still to put in a roundabout at that location.

Voting Aye: Palo, Emery, Halford, Mason, Zacher, Kuharenko, Ellis, Riesinger, and Sanders.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstaining: None.

Absent: Brooks, Bail, Johnson, Christianson, Hopkins, Williams, Bergman, and Magnuson.

MATTER OF PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF 2050 GRAND FORKS LAND USE PLAN

Kouba reported that we have Scott Harmstead from SRF Consulting Group here today to give a brief update on the 2050 Grand Forks Land Use Plan.

Harmstead referred to a power point presentation (a copy of which is included in the file and available upon request), and went over it briefly.

Presentation ensued.

Harmstead stated that he thinks everyone is familiar with the Land Use Plans, and their purpose as part of what the MPO does so he won't spend too much time on that, but this is an important element that we are talking about with decision makers on the City side and the public as well.

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Harmstead commented that engagement for this was a bit difficult with COVID at the outset, and they had to change their tactics a little bit, but at the end of the day they had a lot of different ways that they got input; they did have a Land Use Subcommittee, which is kind of the working group that they vetted everything through and they also had a public workshop early on in the process. He stated that they also had really good focus groups that they met with twice, two series of meetings with them where they really helped to vet the goals and objectives that ended up in the plan. He said that they also have a really good online map that provided some good input, and they held some public in-person input events including attending the Potato Bowl in the Park, and there was a project survey that was very successful and a workshop in March.

Harmstead stated that as far as the contents of the plan; just an overview of that; the first chapter talks about livability principles, really that is the core themes of the plan but it also talks about connections to some of the federal initiatives, FHWA and just general federal initiatives that we want to make sure we are in alignment with.

Harmstead referred to a slide listing the livability principles, and commented that as far as the livability principles go, this is what the chapter layout looks like, all these different elements and then within that we have some discussion of some of the key elements.

Harmstead said that at the core of these Land Use Plans, as you all know, is the Future Land Use Map, which helps to drive and provide the key input to the next step, the Transportation Plan.

Harmstead referred to a slide showing the Future Land Use Categories that we have in the Future Land Use Map, and explained that it really doesn't change much from 2045, they kind of stuck with what the same categories.

Harmstead referred to a slide showing three Future Land Use Maps. He said that they are all the same map, just different ways of looking at it. He went over each briefly.

Harmstead referred to the LU Change (Activation Areas) map and commented that what he thinks is most unique about this plan, when you compare it to the 2045 plan, is that they were asked to look more closely within the City, not just the fringe, and they identified what they are calling "Activation Corridors and Activation Sites" so there are some starred things like the old rail yard along DeMers or Columbia Mall; and then some corridors like a portion of South Washington, University Avenue, South 42nd, where you have some community islands, 32nd Avenue South. He stated that the idea behind these Activation Corridors and Areas is these are areas where we see some redevelopment potential going into the future, whether it is just undeveloped land or properties that are aging and could potentially be redeveloped in the next 30 years, so just providing enhanced focus concentration on those areas to help guide that redevelopment over time.

Harmstead referred to the Growth Tier slide and commented that they did look at the growth tiers. He pointed out that the dark brown is the immediate Tier 1, the orange is Tier 2, and the light orange or tan is Tier 3. He explained that in the middle it shows the changes from the 2045

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Plan. He said that there were some significant additions to Tier 1, the reason being is that the population projection went up significantly when they got the census information from the 2020 census.

Harmstead said that they also looked at, from the City of Grand Forks, you especially should recognize the strategic Infrastructure Growth Areas that the City has identified for a number of years now. He stated that they mention that those would be incorporated into Tier 1 as well. He explained that a lot of them are meant to support industrial development.

Presentation continued.

Harmstead referred to a slide showing a comparison between the 2045 and 2050 Plans. He stated that it shows some of the differences, and with that said the 2045 Plan does have some different colors for some of the designation, for example industrial on that one is gray, and agriculture is just white, so that is part of the biggest difference but if you look closely there is definitely more industrial and more residential to the south on the 2050 map versus the 2045 map.

Harmstead commented that the 2050 map also identifies the flood protection, whether it is the English Coulee or along the south side of the community.

Harmstead referred to the next slide and stated that it is a breakdown for you, a comparison again between 2045 and 2050 in terms of the Tiers. He said that you will see that the numbers are higher, again, with 2050 and they also added the infill column that looks at undeveloped property within the City of Grand Forks or that are County islands. He pointed out that the number of developable acreage is pretty small in comparison to the Tier 1 but it is still significant enough to take some growth in the future.

Harmstead referred to the Activation Areas slide and commented that these are the specific corridors that they identified.

Harmstead referred to the Goals and Objectives slide and said that he won't go point-by-point through all of them, but just to say that they have covered housing; transportation; public health, which is new and some of that was definitely spurred by COVID and how does Land Use respond to COVID, but it is also looking at other things like access to healthy food and recreation; Economic Development and General Development.

Harmstead referred to the Case Studies slide and commented that another thing that is unique and had to do with the need to look closer at infill opportunities was how do we quantify the impact or cost of fringe development versus infill. He said that that is a really difficult situation; as they waded into that it is difficult to do that easily and it is very context sensitive to the community you are looking at so for Grand Forks what they decided to do was to look at two different examples of infill development that has happened more recently, those are shown on the right on the slide, and then they looked at one fringe development that had good data behind it and that was Prairiewood Estates, all four phases of it, so they were able to understand some of

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the differences as far as infrastructure costs, and also some of the situations that encouraged infill development because in some cases infill can be very cost prohibitive because the infrastructure might be deteriorating at such a point that cost to improve that infrastructure is cost prohibitive to development. He stated that one of the keys of infill is that is usually happens because the dollars make sense to actually do the project and that was the case with Blackmore Flats and Lumber Exchange.

Harmstead said that they broke down and did some further analysis, they teamed with Praxis Strategies and they helped provide some deeper analysis and insight to some of those costs, especially as you breakdown housing type, lot size; on the commercial side this looks at how over time the tax revenue per acre of commercial development has declined, generally speaking.

Harmstead commented that the whole idea behind all of this analysis is to help support staff, on the City side, and maybe even the MPO and to help better evaluate infill development and fringe development, to give a bigger picture of the cost of those.

Harmstead referred to the Next Steps slide and went over the next steps for the project.

Sanders said that based on the maps you showed at the beginning of the presentation there is no change in development where the Merrifield Bridge Crossing would be located or where the 32nd Avenue Bridge Crossing would be located. Harmstead responded that, maybe starting with the 32nd Avenue location, that is already developed primarily so there was not change in that area, and then with Merrifield there was no change, it all stayed the same between 2045 and 2050.

Kouba thanked Mr. Harmstead for the presentation and said that if no one has any more questions staff is asking for preliminary approval of the Draft 2050 Land Use Plan, and once the City of Grand Forks adopts the final we will bring it for final approval by the MPO as well.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY SANDERS, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE DRAFT 2050 GRAND FORKS LAND USE PLAN, AS PRESENTED.

Voting Aye: Palo, Emery, Halford, Mason, Zacher, Kuharenko, Ellis, Riesinger, and Sanders.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstaining: None.

Absent: Brooks, Bail, Johnson, Christianson, Hopkins, Williams, Bergman, and Magnuson.

MATTER OF FY2022-2025 TIP ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION

Kouba reported that this is an administrative modification to our FY2022-2025 TIP. She explained that staff received information from the State of Minnesota about an increase in the cost of bus purchases, and the City of East Grand Forks was going to be purchasing a bus in 2022, so with those cost increases we need to make an administrative modification to our TIP to

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increase the cost of that bus purchase from \$169,000 to \$188,000, with a cost share split of \$159,800 Federal, \$9,400.00 State of Minnesota, and \$18,800 Local.

Ellis asked if action was needed on this item. Kouba responded that she didn't think action was needed as it is an administrative modification. She stated that if the Technical Advisory Committee wants to take action they can but it isn't necessary. Mason commented that he would recommend that action be taken. He explained that as part of their work flow with the State Transportation Improvement Program, having the MPO take action on the administrative modification prior to MnDOT entering it into its system, and getting it approved would be beneficial.

MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY HALFORD, TO APPROVE FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD THAT THEY APPROVE THE FY2022-2025 TIP ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION, AS PRESENTED.

Voting Aye: Palo, Emery, Halford, Mason, Zacher, Kuharenko, Ellis, Riesinger, and Sanders.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstaining: None.

Absent: Brooks, Bail, Johnson, Christianson, Hopkins, Williams, Bergman, and Magnuson.

MATTER OF TDP UPDATE

Kouba reported that the RFP was released back in 2021, and we entered into a contract in July 2021 with Kimley-Horn to do the update.

Kouba stated that from July to October Kimley-Horn was gathering a lot of information and data and we went forward with a lot of existing condition information and looked at the financial baseline and forecasts. She said that in October they did the first round of public engagement opportunities and are looking at doing a second round now.

Kouba referred to a power point slide of the Existing Conditions Analysis Content and went over it briefly, explaining that it shows what our existing conditions report consists of including the CAT System overview and performance indicators that we always have; we look at our peer agencies and we do route analysis and transit asset management. She added that we asked that Kimley-Horn look at the transit hubs, not just the Downtown Metro Transit Center, but also what we have at the Grand Cities Mall and what has changed with the UND Campus Memorial Union now that it is completely finished. She said that there is also some existing plan integration, not just from the MPO standpoint but we also asked that Kimley-Horn look at City of Grand Forks and City of East Grand Forks plans as well, and she knows that Grand Forks has had a lot more City planning efforts done, and planning initiatives that we want to make sure we capture in this plan so we have an answer to any questions that might be asked through those planning efforts.

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She stated that we always look at demographics, especially who is more willing to use transit or who have the most need to use transit, and we started looking at our funding baseline analysis.

Kouba commented that we looked at the performances, the fixed route, and the Dial-A-Ride between 2013 and 2019 and we do see a trend of reduced ridership. She said that in 2018 we did have a change to our fixed route routes in that they were totally overhauled, and after that we did have a nice jump in ridership but again that was in 2019 and then 2020 came along and that gave us some interesting results after that. She stated that they did find that our highest ranked routes for performance were 5, 7, and 3. She explained that Route 7 is from the Downtown to Grand Cities Mall to Columbia Mall; Route 5 is from the Downtown to the Gateway Walmart; and Route 3 is from the Downtown to Altru Hospital. She added that Route 3 is also connected to Routes 4 and 6, which are routes that are in East Grand Forks.

Kouba said that ridership for Dial-A-Ride; we had a dip in 2016 but were seeing an increase in ridership until 2020.

Kouba referred to the System Performance Takeaways slide and commented that in terms of System Reliability and Safety we found that just from data they all operate safely compared to national trends and we achieved an overall reliability, especially in time, when we did those route changes; we were able to build in some timing buffers for people to be able to rely on the timing at bus stops.

Kouba stated that they looked at fares; their farebox recovery from 2013 to present has been trending down; of course between 2019 and 2020 everything has really gone down because of COVID. She said that they also found that the 31 day passes or working day passes were becoming popular. She added that they did compare to peer agencies, and some of the peer agencies were changed from the previous plan as they wanted to make sure they had a reduced number of peers but also wanted to make sure that those agencies were experiencing the same things we were; increase in cost, lower ridership, as well as making sure that the population they had is very similar and on task with what Grand Forks/East Grand Forks has, and that they had similar community things like a university or college campus within the city.

Kouba referred to a slide of Peer Analysis and pointed out that Grand Forks is the dotted line on the tables. She stated that we on par with most of our peers, showing a slight decrease, but we didn't decrease as some in 2020. She referred to the table on the right and explained that it shows performance measures and targets that can be federally looked at to receive additional funding for Cities Area Transit, and she found that they are pretty consistent across the board.

Kouba referred to the next slide and commented that the productivity of the routes are looking the same as our peers. She then referred to the next slide and stated that it shows the cost per mile and the cost per trip and it shows that the cost is going up for us and our peers.

Kouba referred to the Peer Fare Comparison slide and explained that previously we only looked at single ride full fare as well as reduced fares but this time we also included what available passes and fares were included as well. She said that Grand Forks has 10-day, 14-day, 31-day

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and 1-day passes. She stated that we see that most of our peers have at least a monthly pass of some sort; some have a mix of different levels of those 30-day passes so that might be something we can look at in the future.

Kouba referred to the Key Takeaway slide and pointed out that we have a reliable and safe transit system, and we are basically on point with our peers, fares are similar, but we do see some things that we can look at to help improve performance.

Kouba referred to the Financial Baseline slide and commented that they evaluated the resources, the revenues, as well as the expenses that we have for both the fixed route and the dial-a-ride services. She said that there are still CARES and ARPA dollars available to both transit agencies, and they are also trying to get a handle on the new transportation bill and their funding sources.

Kouba commented that in terms of revenue, you can see that \$4 million is pretty much what we need to spend for operating and capital costs. She said, however, that with the new law we are looking at possibly having a 5% growth in revenues from the federal sources. She added that in the past we have only had about a 2% growth, or 2.5% growth from the States, and we also made assumptions in the past for a 2% growth for the local share as well, so they will probably keep that growth of revenues at that 2% overall, just because we are going to stay very conservative, especially since we don't have a very good handle on how much additional funding we may be getting from the federal apportionments.

Kouba referred to the next group of slides on engagement opportunities and stated that in October they did surveys of the riders, as well as the general public, so the survey was available online. She added that there was also an interactive map available as well. She said that they also sent out surveys for the decision makers, so City Council members, Planning and Zoning Commission members and the MPO Executive Policy Board members received the survey in order for us to gather input as to what they are hearing from the public and to try to get more operators to take the survey as well but they have been a very busy group of people so it makes sense we didn't receive many responses from them. She added that there were focus groups that were comprised of representatives from businesses, community services and riders.

Kouba referred to the next few slides on the results from the Public Surveys, and went over those results briefly.

Kouba commented that they have begun the second phase of the update; Engagement Phase 2. She said that the plan was to have Kimley-Horn ride the buses and helping implement the surveys. She stated that the survey is still available online, but the paper surveys are with Kimley-Horn and they won't be up in this area until next week when they will do all of the work that they were planning to do this week.

Kouba referred to the Draft Cities Area Transit Goals slide and stated that they will also be presenting goals. She said that they came up with more concise goals and goal statements so they are more relatable to people. She added that they want the document to be citizen friendly

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so that they understand what is happening, so that the decision makers can understand clearly what is needed for transit and so that is the purpose of these goals. She said that these goals will be able to incorporate the livability principles as well as the federal planning factors, livability planning factors.

Kouba reported that the service improvement ideas that they are presenting right now are basically some incorporation of micro-transit in the northern part of the area, as well as improvements to the routes so we aren't going in just one direction but are making sure to go in both directions along the same route, and adding a route through the Industrial Park area.

Kouba referred to a slide give an overview of micro-transit and stated that they offered up what was considered micro-transit so people didn't misunderstand what it is. She explained that rides can be requested on-demand or in advance for pick-up and drop-off at certain locations within a defined zone, so it only works on one area and it is only offered from the start of transit service to the end of transit service, so you can't call for it after transit service has ended for the day.

Kouba referred to slides showing service ideas for Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, and UND and went over those ideas briefly.

Kouba stated that tomorrow, April 14th, they are holding an information session to educate people about all the possible service changes. She said that they will then hold an input session on April 21st to get feedback on what they like and/or don't like about those changes so that before we implement them into our plan we have an idea of what people are more willing to do or are more willing to listen to into the future. She added that they will also be doing some other focus groups at that time.

Kouba referred to the Schedule and Next Steps slide and said that, just to summarize, they are sharing ideas and getting input from the public on them before we implement them into the plan. She said that it is their plan to have a final draft in September.

Information only.

MATTER OF MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kouba reported that as you know we were holding interviews last month, and the Executive Policy Board held a special meeting on April 4th and announced that they had hired Stephanie Halford as the new Executive Director, so we Congratulate Ms. Halford on being chosen as the new Executive Director.

Halford thanked everyone and stated that she is very excited for the future. Pierce asked when she will officially start. Halford responded that May 16th will be her official first day.

Information only.

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OTHER BUSINESS

A. 2021/2022 Annual Work Program Project Update

Kouba said that we have our Unified Work Program Project update. She commented that, as you know we are closing in on the end of the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan update, and you were just updated on the Transit Plan. She said that we have Bolton-Menk starting to gather information for our Bike/Ped Plan update, and we should have proposals on April 15th for our Street and Highway Plan.

Kouba commented that she does have an update for our Pavement Management System update, and there has been a few more delays. She said that she knows that GoodPointe was looking at possibly coming up here to do some re-shoots of some areas, but she hasn't heard if they were able to do that considering our weather lately. She stated that because of these delays we are looking at extending their contract, a time only extension, no change to the budget, so the Executive Policy Board can approve that at their next meeting. She said that we are looking at extending the contract to have the work completed by May, adopting the update in June, and project completion in July.

Kouba stated that we also heard that MnDOT is having an Active Transportation Planning Assistance solicitation. She said that there are some informational webinars, one was today at 2:00 and another will be on April 25th at 10:00 a.m. and solicitation is due by June. She asked if either Mr. Mason or Ms. Pierce have any additional information about this. Pierce responded that you can reach out to Jake Rueter (Jacob.rueter@state.mn.us) or Michael Petesch (Michael.metesch@state.mn.us) for additional information. She also said that you can also find more information at: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/active-transportation-program/>. Mason commented that that would be his suggestion as well. He said that you mentioned that it was planning assistance, and yes it is but it isn't infrastructure at this time, it could be, in the future, a Infrastructure Active Transportation Program, but what is currently being solicited is the planning assistance only.

Information only.

B. Agency Updates

Zacher stated that he emailed Ms. Kouba earlier this week; and he is wondering if you are working this Friday being it is a State holiday. Kouba responded that she would be in the office Friday as it isn't a holiday for the MPO. Zacher said he wasn't sure, and he wasn't sure there would be mail that day for the consultants to be able to meet the proposal deadline, to give them those last couple of hours or so to get them in, so he just offered that up, so just let him know as soon as you can if you don't the number of consultant submittals we need for interviews. He commented that the last two RFPs Bismarck sent out; they had a dual study with their MTP and their Travel Demand Model with socio-economic component on it, they only received on proposal back, and then they just sent their Transit Development Plan out, and those are due, and

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they didn't get any back, so two big studies and they got one proposal so, again, it may be a factor of looking at other avenues for posting other than just through the NDDOT. He said that Rachel did send out an email to, he assumes consultants, and one consultant said that they were dinged for location on a previous study so they were gun-shy, and another said that they didn't know anything about the TDP, so it is just about getting the word out about upcoming studies. Kouba said that we will keep an eye on that; she said it hasn't been too bad this time around, but she knows that in the past it has been an issue here as well. Zacher commented that he doesn't know if it is a matter of market saturation because they had four or five RFPs go out in a short timeframe, so that may play a roll in it as well. Halford asked if any consultants have reached out with questions. Zacher responded that his understanding was, at least on this one, Teri, you said that you had two reach out. Kouba responded that she has had two that set up times to talk to her, and there was another that asked a couple of questions via email, so if we can get all three of those so hopefully we will have at least enough for interviews.

Kouba stated that it is her intention to get all the information out to the Selection Committee tomorrow afternoon, so those on the Selection Committee, if you haven't put in a time that you are available, please do so so that she can set the interview time when she sends out all the other information.

Information only.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY ELLIS, SECONDED BY HALFORD, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 13TH, 2022
MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT 2:34 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis, Office Manager