

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
OF THE GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Wednesday, June 15, 2022 - 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks Training Conference Room/Zoom Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Jeannie Mock, Chairperson, called the June 15th, 2022, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:04 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

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

Absent: None.

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mock declared a quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE MAY 18TH, 2022 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY ROST, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE MAY 18TH, 2022 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR JEANNIE MOCK

Halford presented Jeannie Mock a Letter of Appreciation and a Plaque in appreciation for her years of service on the MPO Executive Policy Board.

Halford thanked Ms. Mock on behalf of both communities for all her service and help over her tenure on the MPO Executive Policy Board.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF FY2022-2025 T.I.P. AMENDMENT

Kouba reported that this is kind of a quick go-around; we were informed that NDDOT received word that there were going to be some railroad safety improvements done in our MPO area and they do include federal funds, with the railroad covering the local share of the project costs.

Kouba said that a public hearing at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting last Wednesday and received no comments from the public. She stated that the Technical Advisory Committee did recommend approval of this addition to our FY2022-2025 T.I.P.

MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO APPROVE THE FY2022-2025 T.I.P. AMENDMENT, AS PRESENTED.

DeMers asked what the rail component is, what are they going to be doing. Kouba responded that they are just making updates to the actual section of rail that is in the roadway, so it is addressing safety issues and things of that nature. DeMers asked if this was on Merrifield. Kouba responded that it is near Merrifield, toward the very bottom of the MPO area. She added that they didn't receive a whole lot of information, but we needed to get it on the agenda to get it into the T.I.P.

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

Voting Nay: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: None.

MATTER OF PROGRAMMING UPDATE WORK GROUP

Kouba reported that with the new transportation bill there has been some new information being put forward, and one of the groups that helped inform MnDOT Leadership is a group called the Programming Update Work Group. She said that they are there to give input and there are various representatives from counties, MPOs, cities, townships, and districts. She stated that our District 2 Representative, Jon Mason, will be a member of this work group and will be giving us updates.

Kouba commented that federal rules require that there are local transportation partners at the table, so Minnesota and MnDOT have put together this work group. She stated that what got people's attention was a presentation that MnDOT gave to the Technical Advisory Committee, and the biggest thing is that they are looking at State Transportation Block Grant funds.

Kouba explained that these funds come from two buckets; one based on population and the other is statewide. She said that previously the transportation laws had it divided into three population sized buckets; less than 5,000, 5,000 to 200,000 and then greater than 200,000 in population. She stated that the new transportation bill split the middle pot into two separate pots; 5,000 to 50,000 and 50,000 to 200,000. She added that the 50,000 to 200,000 pot is important because that is the lower end of the MPO designation; MPO designation starts at a population of 50,000

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right now, so one of the questions raised was “what does it mean to have this new grouping”, is it better, is it worse; some of the facts that MnDOT, currently they consult the MPOs on different projects and things of that nature, and coordinate over 200,000, now there is a little bit more consultation with MPOs themselves, which is helpful for a lot of projects, more input in the region, but the difference is is that we are looking at different funding sources that we are adding. She said that MnDOT has a certain amount every year that goes to the 5,000 to 200,000 so if they split it up there would be a little less or a little more depending upon what we are looking at, but if we did this you can see the regular funding source, every year East Grand Forks would get \$171,000 a year or they can build it up up to four years and then spend it, but at the end of the day it would not be the same amount of money that they are currently getting for funding; currently East Grand Forks is getting \$860,000 every four years, so this would end up being \$600,000 and some dollars if you built it up for four years, so it wouldn't be as much so the Work Group is recommending that we continue to use the funding we currently get instead of going with this new funding.

Kouba commented that this was the major issue that came up at the last meeting of this work group, and staff just wanted to give an update on what transpired at the meeting. She stated that they are planning to meet monthly until a full understanding of the new transportation bill is met, so we will continue to forward any updates we get from the group.

DeMers said then, you get the \$20,000, the \$171,000 and the \$19,000 every year for four years. Kouba responded that you wouldn't; it would only be the STBG Regular amount of \$171,000. She added that we would probably get the Transportation Enhancement funds as well, but it that is unclear. She said that the way MnDOT does the carbon reduction is a little bit differently, but we wouldn't get that. DeMers stated that he is just saying that if you add them all up and take it times four it would be about what we are getting now, so he is just wondering if that is their intent. Kouba responded that they were explaining it at this point in time it was not. DeMers said that with it being a block grant does that mean that we would have to apply for it every year. Kouba responded that it would be handled just like your subtarget funds are right now. DeMers asked if the State has to apply for it every year. Kouba responded that they wouldn't, that it is formula funding based on the population, but there is a certain amount that is set aside for statewide needs, and she thinks the State does do some sort of application statewide, but it isn't very clear if they do it or if they just use it for their state roadway, the highways in Minnesota. DeMers commented that the reason why you get block grants is so that you reduce the cost because people don't go through the applications, and then you can also just pull that block grant because it isn't a continual funding source.

Grasser asked if there were any changes to the local cost share or the cost efforts, he thinks that is a little bit where you are going to is it going to take more work or do we have to come up with more money on the local side. Kouba responded that it would still be the 80/20 split for these sub-targets, just as they are currently. She explained that it was just trying to do that evaluation of how much funding it would mean if you started breaking out the 50,000 in population to 200,000 in population across Minnesota so that they would be having the focus funding as opposed to the 5,000 to 200,000, and there is various funding breaks for this and the other ones as well. DeMers asked what are the programs for the other smaller categories because currently

they aren't getting. Kouba responded that they do get a certain amount of sub-target dollars, but she isn't sure how the State works that out for the 5,000 or less. DeMers asked if was State-Aid or something. Kouba responded that she doesn't know if it is so much the State-Aid but there is a sub-target that the State works with for those other cities.

DeMers asked when this group makes its recommendations; is it going to be ??? or is it going to be a legislative process. Kouba responded that they make their recommendations to MnDOT Leadership, and then MnDOT Leadership makes a report to the Legislators. DeMers said then that it will take statutory effort to change this.

MATTER OF NDDOT AND MNDOT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Kouba reported that this is also an update on where MnDOT and NDDOT are with their performance measures. She stated that we know that they are starting to look at their performance measures, and throughout their performance measure update process both States set their measures, they do talk to the MPOs about what they are looking at for methodology as well as what they are most likely going to present to their Leadership and then their Leadership will move forward with those performance measures and targets.

Kouba commented that NDDOT has presented their Safety Performance Measure Targets. She said that MnDOT has presented their Safety, Pavement Management and Bridge Condition, and the Travel Reliability targets. Kouba stated that in the staff report she gave a breakdown of what we are looking at for those different targets. She explained that it is federally mandated that States put together their targets and then the MPOs can decide if they want to follow the State targets or make their own targets, so we are just updating the Technical Advisory Committee and the Executive Policy Board on what the States are telling the MPOs. She said that once they establish and adopt their targets then the MPO has 180 days to make a decision as to whether they want to use those targets or develop their own so and we will be bringing forward MPO data and relating it to the targets that the States will have adopted at that point.

Kouba reported that they are looking at some baseline targets, your safety performance measure targets are done basically every year so we are looking at traffic fatalities, fatality rates, serious injuries, and serious injury rates as well as the non-motorized severe and fatal injuries combined. She stated that the first three; traffic fatalities, fatality rate, and serious injuries are set yearly by the Department of Safety, so they end up in a Highway Safety Plan as well, so the first three always have to match the State as well as what is presented by the Department of Public Safety.

Kouba stated that one issue is that we are dealing with the whole Covid19 event so we are still kind of getting over the hump of that, but luckily with the Safety Targets it is a rolling average so it should smooth out anything. She said that they use a five-year average for five years and then every year it is updated.

Grasser said that he has always struggled with these targets, and part of the reason is understanding the philosophy of how you choose that number. He stated that it would be nice if we had a better understanding of things like what were the drivers that caused them to choose a

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number in that category, how do you end up with 1463.4, somebody's got something in mind in there, right, you aren't rounding it very much. Kouba responded that MnDOT has chosen not to round any of the numbers because it is a five-year average, so it is an average of all those years. Grasser said that, again, his point is that we are asked to weigh in on this thing so it would be nice to know, there has to be some major drivers that lead to any specific number in any specific category as opposed to otherwise you just kind of get a number and we go "hmmm..okay". Kouba said that, again, as she said it is the average number of serious injuries or fatalities, the rate is a per 1-million vehicle miles traveled, so it would be the total number divided by the number of miles. Grasser commented that he thinks on their end, philosophically they don't want to set the bar so low that...but on the other hand you don't want to pick a number that is so high that it isn't easily achievable; he hasn't ever been able to kind of categorize that in his head. Kouba stated that it is five-year rolling average so you've got five years and you've got the average of those five years so each total, whether it is fatalities or serious injuries, each year is totaled up and then divided by the miles. Grasser said, then, that they are just strictly using math, they are dividing the five-year average by five, and that is how they end up with the numbers they do, so that helps him understand better.

Powers said, then, Covid is responsible for the dip in 2017 to 2021. Kouba responded that the North Dakota graph does show that. Powers asked if we think we are going to have another dip because of the high price of gas or are people still driving. Kouba responded that it depends on what ends of happening, on the North Dakota Safety Measures they have several years worth of other to compare to, that is what the previous years are, the 2014 to 2018 and 2015 to 2019, so it keeps on-going for actual measures.

Vetter commented that he finds it interesting that they set a proposed target and their comments are not to meet it. Grasser said that that is why he questions whether there are consequences if you don't; a lot of times it comes back that there probably aren't going to be any but he it also makes him nervous. Kouba responded that for the Safety Measures and the Performance Targets if you do not meet both measures, it is the full complement so it isn't just one thing, if you hit two out of three or three out of five of the targets then you still pass, you still meet the targets, otherwise with the safety you have to use all your safety funds towards safety projects, that is the result for this part.

DeMers stated that, more than figuring out the actual baseline, how are they calculating their target, because some of them are 15% reduction, some are 18% and the last one is 9% reduction; how are they calculating those out on the Minnesota side. He added that it isn't like we are going to say that across the board we want to take a 10% reduction over those, they are anywhere from 9% to 18%. Kouba responded that Safety Targets are a little different than the other targets; and she is assuming you are talking about the pavement and things like that. DeMers said he is talking just about the Safety Targets, the 2023 proposed target, so for traffic fatalities that is like a 15% reduction and the next one is 15% and the next is 12%, there is no standard or constant reduction, so what are they using. Kouba responded that once again you are getting a strict math average and you are comparing it to a baseline, which would be the 2017 to 2021 average, and so did we do better or did we not do better. She said that in the future, with the way they are looking at the statistics that are happening right now for fatalities and serious injuries,

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they are thinking that they may not meet their target. DeMers commented, then, that target is actually a trend, they should probably put that graph in. Kouba responded that she reduced the number but she didn't give you the full presentation. Halford commented that it was quite a big presentation, she thinks they are estimating it at being an hour-long presentation that they would be giving to the group, which is too long, but there was a graph in that. Kouba said that she has the full presentation available. Halford stated that we will send it out to the whole group.

Grasser said that he still; you know the number 2.875, that is the mathematical average of the baseline yet somehow we come out of that and we come up with what amounts to about a 20% reduction in our 2023 target from the baseline, how do you come to that decision; he isn't saying it is wrong, he is trying to understand how you come up with that because that is a pretty substantial reduction, when you look at it as a percentage, that is a pretty big change. DeMers commented that it is 14%. He added that he thinks it makes more sense if they are saying they are using the actual trend line that they are trying to hit and then you have your baseline that is fluctuating, he gets that, and it makes more sense if that target is proposed, it isn't a specific target compared to what the baseline is there but it is an ongoing trend, and hopefully it is trend downwards, and then they are proposing what the actuality is, that makes more sense to him.

Kouba commented that currently the MPO has been setting their own targets for safety, based on the regional traffic fatalities and injuries. DeMers asked if they were Minnesota numbers or regional numbers. Kouba responded that they are Minnesota statewide numbers. She said that that is one of the reasons we set our own targets as it is more relatable to when we are talking on a regional level, but we somehow have to make sure that our targets will support in some way this as well, so we can continue to get safety funding even though we are stating or supporting it, we can show regional when we use safety dollars in order to improve our safety rates.

Kouba stated that each of these targets have their own deadlines so we are looking at sometime in February when we would have to submit our targets for safety, and then our bridge and pavement targets, MnDOT is the only state that provided targets to us. She pointed out that they are four-year targets that they set but they do look at them after two years to make sure they are still on the same path for performance of the pavement or the bridge. Powers asked what constitutes a poor condition of an interstate. Kouba responded that this is the pavement condition, so the condition of the pavement would be considered poor in a section, so it is kind of a combination of ride quality as well as the cracking, faulting, and breaking up of the pavement itself on the interstate. Powers commented that he wonders if that stretch on I29 going outside of Fargo would qualify, some of it is really bad. Kouba responded that this is MnDOT, so one of the reasons why our MPO has only ever looked at the Interstate targets for this is in North Dakota, how we match North Dakota because they are the only one that has an interstate.

Kouba commented that for bridges they are looking at 30% good and only 4% in poor condition, and they are pretty much on target across the board. She said that she does want to say that these are only on the NHS system, so the roads are going to be principal arterials and interstate so the pavement and the bridges aren't anything lower than those functionally classified roads will not be included in the valuation.

Kouba stated that reliability is the consistent time it takes for a vehicle to travel from Point A to Point B, so a section of roadway, and it isn't based on, "well it takes me longer in this section to get across it but it consistently takes me this much time to get across". She said that they are only looking at interstate and NHS system, as well as the freight. She added that these are also four-year targets with a review after two-years.

Kouba said that for MnDOT they should be able to have new targets set up in late September so we will need to start our process in October, but we will be under North Dakota because they are our lead agency, so when we get the last of the targets from North Dakota we can move on from there.

Kouba commented that they did briefly go through the Safety Targets that North Dakota had presented. She added that they haven't received any of the other targets from them.

Kouba stated that this is just an update on what the States have been talking to us about.

MATTER OF SOLOCITATION OF PROJECT APPLICATIONS FOR THE FY2024-2025 ND TA (TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES) PROGRAM

Halford reported that the North Dakota Transportation Alternatives Program solicitation has become available for years 2024 and 2025. She stated that there are a few things to keep in mind if you are thinking about putting an application in, including needing Grand Forks City Council approval before you submit it to the MPO, and it needs to be in by July 27th.

Halford said that TA funding has always been an 80/20 split, so the local sponsor match and then the federal funding is 80%. She added that it doesn't cover things like planning, engineering, buying right-of-way and things like that, but something new that they have added this year is that there is no longer a cap this time. She said that you will be notified in the fall of the status of the application(s), so it is a really quick turn-around, as well as we are looking at years 2024 and 2025.

Halford commented that she attached in the staff report more in-depth information on the program, but if anyone has any questions or projects they want to discuss with the group, and of course during the process if there is anything that the MPO can do to help with an application we would be more than happy to assist.

DeMers said that he would imagine that Grand Forks has a ton of projects for this. He asked if there was anything in the school zones, like a 32nd Avenue school zone kind of project. Mock said, though, that it can't be an engineering, but can it be a construction project. Halford responded that it can't be engineering or right-of-way, or utilities or anything. DeMers said that he knows that there had been some talk about maybe doing an additional study in those areas. Mock asked if some of that study been done by Safe Routes to School, are there things that are ready to be implemented. Kouba responded that the MPO has done school safety studies and there are things in those studies that can be updated so we can definitely look at those.

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Grasser stated that he will just put on his engineering hat and say that he thinks that it is nice to see an improvement where they take some of the caps off of this program because there have been projects that they have looked at in the past where a cap makes it not feasible to move forward. He said that the problem here is that we have too short of a timeline for them to do justice and evaluate what might be a good project to try to pursue by July 27th, after having gone through City Council and everything at that point in time, it really isn't reasonable for them to evaluate some of the more complicated projects; and part of that evaluation, so you know; there are times when they will choose to do a bikepath or something with or without federal funds, because what they have found is that applying for federal grants is essentially more cost neutral for the city, because of the items that aren't included as a cost participating item, you can basically take about 30% or more of a project cost, and that is locally funded; and then you take 20% of qualified costs and that is what they fund, so the mathematics of it come out to be pretty close to 50/50, and if in fact we have to do something more unusual on the local side, like relocating utilities, or any number of different other things, it actually becomes cheaper for them to do it as a local project than it would be to apply for federal funds, so that is partially why we want to be careful and we want to do the evaluation of what doesn't make sense because the other component that measures in here that isn't a direct and natural component is the level left on staff to chase the federal grants, a lot of paperwork and process goes into that that doesn't fit into that 20% or 30% cost number, so again, at some point in time the program is structured such that there aren't any really big incentives to try to chase it to be honest, and that doesn't mean that they don't, but they want to be careful, especially if we take the caps off and start looking at larger dollar amount projects and July doesn't really give them enough time to reasonably do that.

Halford asked if the City would still put an application in, do you have one that is ready to submit. Grasser responded that they don't for July. Halford said that if there is anything that she can help with if you want to meet she would be happy to help. Grasser responded that he appreciates it, but, again a part of the issue is the time of year, they are pretty swamped, so unless there is a path where there is just a lot of advantages; they started to prioritize their work load quite frankly, they are trying to look for a return on the investment or effort. DeMers asked if there are things that are; like the Herald just had the thing with the young lady that won the award for Crossing Guard of the Year, and one of the prizes was money towards additional signage and stuff like that, are there more soft things that could be applied for like flags or programs for kids, is that something that Safe Routes would be looking at as more education and improvement, are those uses for this or not. Halford responded that they have done stuff like that through Safe Routes to School before, but they were with grants that were a little bit more appropriate and it makes more sense if you have a gravel path or something that you want to convert into a paved multi-use path. She added that the past projects that Grand Forks has gone after, and have been very successful with for a good chunk of years have been those kind of projects. She stated that there are some other programs coming out too in the near future that would make sense to go after for some of those smaller projects, but this one you kind of want to go with a bigger dollar amount.

Rost commented that as far as studies go, depending on where that bridge goes, and lets just say 32nd Avenue, your safe routes are going to change significantly because you've got Kelly, you've

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got Schroeder, and some things are going to have to be redone to facilitate that roadway. He stated that he is out there everyday doing crossing guard duties at Kelly school and traffic is heavy enough right now, and it is really bad down on 32nd, which he isn't down there, but morning commutes are terrible and if that bridge goes there that's a really big problem and big studies are going to have to be done with that. Vein asked if most of it pedestrian or vehicles, are there kids crossing and they are having problem or is it all the vehicles. DeMers responded that is the drop off of kids. Rost added that it is also the number of cars going to work, they don't alternative routes, they take Cherry Street, so it gets really heavy and it is amazing to him how many people aren't paying attention, being on their cellphone, if he was still the Sheriff he would be writing tickets because they are texting and stuff, and kids are crossing right in front of them, they don't pay attention. Mock said that she thought there were plans that had been developed for some of these different school areas; where are those, because she thought that we invested money and there had been studies, there were plans to help address those existing issues. Vein agreed, adding that he thought some of them had been implemented. Mock said that with the potential for money like this, where are those plans, is there something of value that you could put in place that could help that issue today. Vein agreed, saying that we don't have to wait for a bridge, they need to be done now. Mock said that she agrees, and she is wondering where they are at now, where they exist, if it is between the City or the School District, or where. Kouba commented that they are safety plans that the MPO did for the schools. Vein asked if we can find out where that is. Kouba responded that they should be on our website, but if they aren't we can make sure to get them. Vein asked whose responsibility is it to implement them. Kouba responded that it would be a combination of the City as well as the School District because some of those things need to happen on the school property itself. Vein asked if the City has them. Kouba responded that the MPO has given them to Engineering and Planning, as well as the School District, so it is a matter of who wants to come forward to implement them. Mock asked if staff would send them out again, because she doesn't exactly remember what it was that we were looking at so it might be a good thing for all of us to look at.

Powers stated that it would be good to get them to the new school board members as they may have a fresh attitude. Mock agreed, adding that obviously if it is on school district ground they would have to agree to do any of it. She added that the school district doesn't have any money so if they would agree to have it happen on their land; if we applied for this we might have funding that could help, whether it is our responsibility or theirs. Vein stated that he is taking this as you don't wait until after and wonder why we didn't do something. Mock added that if it is drop off, you are always going to have a huge number of cars for drop off but if there is a better way to lay it out so that they can move better or a different way so that they aren't having kids cross lanes or something, because that is always a recipe for accidents and we don't want that to occur if there is something we can do. DeMers said that bringing it back here probably isn't what should be done, he thinks it is something that we need to get to the School Board now because if it is a July deal it probably isn't going to happen because it is a pretty tight timeline, we have to do something today to see if there is anything out there that is executable that can be ready in a month. Vein added that this is for years 2024 and 2025 and there are things that should be done before then.

MATTER OF BRIDGE DISCUSSION

Halford reported that the Board requested, at your last meeting, that this item be a standing item on the agenda. She added that she also asked the Technical Advisory Committee if they would like it as a standing item on their agenda as well and they responded that they would, so they will be getting the same thing as well.

Halford commented that East Grand Forks sent out an RFP that is due June 30th, and there are plans for a Joint Council meeting on July 11th. She said that she was asked to provide a 10-15 minute refresher or overview of what the recent bridge study determined so everyone in the room hears the same thing at the same time. She added that they also wanted a bullet point of at least the next couple of steps, so, what do we do next; we have this RFP out there, we've done this study, what is the next steps from here, so that is what the plan is although there will be other people speaking as well, and that is what she knows so far about that meeting.

DeMers said that, and he doesn't know if anyone has seen much of what they are sending over for that RFP, and getting at those next steps, but they are thinking of hiring someone that can shepherd is through those steps to identify what needs to be done, what the timelines are, and do that because it seems like we've gone through this a million times, so what do we need to do to get this done and the approach is to get someone to help because it is something we don't do every day; it is multi-state, there are a lot of different jurisdictions and such, so that was kind of the purpose of getting this consultant in place to guide us through that, get us to a pre-shovel ready plan.

Vein commented that the funding issue needs to be a part of this as well, because you have the technical part, you've got the political part, and you've got the funding part; you've got all three of those to deal with, and you have multi-city, multi-state and multi-county. DeMers said that he thinks as this process goes forward you are going to be able to identify what those funding prospects are; we have basically heard a lot from the different DOT staffs that there isn't a lot of programmatic funding for this type of thing, there might be some weird things here and there, but this is a management level conversation for stuff like this, it will be talking to the legislators or congress or whatever, he doesn't foresee it being something that we are just going to pull funding off the shelf and be able to plug it in and use it for that, unless it is for plans and specs maybe there is some funding for that, but we have already been working with their legislators for planning dollars, not for the complete construction, but for some planning development and such as we anticipate millions of dollars going into just that phase so they have been having discussions, but obviously there wasn't any funding for this year, but that has kind of been their approach, to try to find dollars that way for this. He said that he has kind of given up hope on thinking that the DOTs themselves are going to do this, so it is a management decision and working above the program administrators with the DOTs. Halford reported that what she has heard from the DOTs is that it is a local bridge, so they aren't going to take the lead on it, so it will be one or the other city coming forward and saying they will take the lead, just as was done with the other bridges between the two cities.

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Vein stated that he thinks for Grand Forks, we have a Legislative Session coming up and there is information that they are hearing now, so we need to determine what we need to do for our prioritization, and cost share is a big deal, and that is why we need to, sooner than later, get this stuff out otherwise it just hangs on, so he thinks what East Grand Forks did is great. DeMers said that they need a partner, so hopefully at this meeting we will at least get agreement that we need to get this process going and keep it going. Mock asked if this will be the full council from each side at this meeting. Halford responded that it will be both full councils.

Vein commented that the question for him is, again getting back to leadership, is this an MPO issue, which is all of us, or is it the city councils working together. Halford asked what he means by that. Vein responded that the Cities are hiring a consultant to shepherd this through, that is where it is at today, but is that a stunt for city to city leadership, wouldn't this be an MPO leadership. Halford responded that the leadership part for the MPO would be; this is the information to help guide your decision making, and then it will be up to the cities to make that decision. Vein agreed saying that to get funding they have to make a decision, but he is talking about the leadership. Halford said that that would have to be decided by the cities as well. Kouba added that if you are making this decision then that is where the leadership is coming from. Vein said, though, that the cities, in all these things, end up being in the leadership; where does the transition from an MPO led project to hiring a city staff person to lead the project start. DeMers stated that part of what he envisions, and he knows it maybe will come out at this next meeting, but he imagines there is some sort of, whether it is an actual JPA or like a closet JPA group, similar to what we were doing with the wastewater, where we have a group that is going to be able to be made up of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks representative, they wouldn't maybe be the MPO but let's get a couple of leaders from this group, and some from that group, and the mayors on board and then let that be our working group. Vein agreed, adding that that would be City led, and you've got all that run by the Cities, and the MPO is not leading it.

Halford said, going back to the original question about when that transition is, it is right now. Vein asked what is right now. Halford responded that that transition going from the MPO to the Cities to make decisions. She said that we've done the study, the information is out there of all the options that were looked at, and now you have to take that information and use your best judgement as to what is going to the best for each City. She added that the MPO can definitely help keep getting out the information and helping with that conversation, but there really isn't much more the MPO can do.

DeMers asked what the MPOs role is in NEPA. Kouba responded that in terms of the PEL process, we've done that process already with our traffic study, and that is as far as we can go with that process. She said that we narrowed down selections and gave the information as to why they were narrowed down that way, but once again, that is where your NEPA process picks up; okay you can bring that information into your NEPA and move forward with the rest of the engineering side of it.

Grasser commented that he thinks there is a differentiation between leadership and funding. He explained that traditionally we use the MPO and are able to obtain federal share on studies and things like that; and he knows we have heard a number of times about, well what about this and

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what about this, and we are told that we can't carry the study that far because of the limitations of federal cost sharing. He said that he is going to speak for Ms. Halford and put her in a tight spot here, but theoretically if we wanted to just simply apply local money, and have the MPO manage the process without any federal participation, he doesn't know that there is anything that would preclude us from doing that, if the cities felt that that was a better leadership process, but then if the MPO comes back in the picture almost later on once you're able to identify the project enough to actually ask for federal or maybe even state cost sharing, so that what is odd about this, there is that environmental gap that we don't qualify for, it is too soon to ask for constructions, it isn't detailed enough to use planning, you are looking at more detail than what you get with planning.

Vein said that that is why he likes this discussion, to get feedback, but if you are using the sewer connect, that isn't a transportation project; the MPO does transportation, we did all the studies, we determined where it should be located, we've actually voted where it should be located, we started working on doing some of the environmental work, the hydraulics, we've done all of that, so what is the right way to move it forward; we could establish a new one or we can use what we've got. DeMers stated that that is a great point, and aren't the Mayor's a member of the MPO. Kouba responded that they are Ex-Officio members. DeMers said, then, that we have it so it doesn't have to be the full Executive Board, maybe have it like we did with our Finance Committee, have it be a Bridge Committee function of this board, so it separates it out and it doesn't overwhelm everything that we are doing at this level, maybe it deserves its own time and place and meeting. Powers asked if we can somehow emphasis the fact that the two City Councils are going to meet July 11th, and maybe the two Mayors can participate in that too. Halford responded that they are already included in the meeting.

Halford said, going back to the sub-committee idea, she brought up the question for the July 11th meeting that it is great that we are all coming together, but I guess you want to look at it at the end part of it, what do you want to get out of that meeting, and the same with that committee, what do you want answered, what question do you want to get answered and what is your next step after that; it is great that they are going to come together, but since it has been talked about for twenty or thirty years, since the 70s we've been talking about a south end bridge, she would hate for you to meet to meet and then you just go in circles and talk and don't get anywhere, so a new way to look at it is that it is good to come together, but what do you want to get out of it.

Vetter commented that the RFP that East Grand Forks is writing, is by the City of East Forks, so the City of East Grand Forks is going to hire the consultant to all of this study. He said that when they visited with Todd Feland early on on how they wanted to do it, his feelings were that Grand Forks has enough on their plate so if you want to run with this, run with it and when you need their 50% of the money, come to him and he will take it to council and he will have the votes to get it passed, that is what Mr. Feland told them, so right now the City of East Grand Forks has the RFP, we will get responses back by the end of June, and they will hire someone to walk them through the whole bridge concept. Vein stated that that is what we need, he isn't debating that at all because we have to do it, but one of the things is he doesn't even know where we are at. He said that he thought that we had a vote earlier and had already selected a location, and we came back and revisited and looked at some things, but what has been approved and

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where we officially at with this bridge, is it still just a concept, he knows we did approvals and he knows we've done studies, has anybody put that together in some type of one thing or another that just tells us today where we are at. Halford responded that there are past Land Use Plans and past Street and Highway Plans where locations have been labeled and approved.

Vein said that there have been ??? and actions where the MPO has taken a certain number of actions, each City Council has taken actions, he believes because it is inner-city; what are those actions and where are they stated, that is one of the basic questions he has. DeMers said that he thinks, to Mr. Grasser's point, it stands as we are doing a 32nd bridge until the issue of funding comes up and that is when there will need to be a vote by both councils on whether we or not we are going to spend dollars on it and that is going to be the determining factor, and he has been saying it has been in our plan forever, which is true, but until, and you have had contentious votes on where it is going to be, and it has always passed, but like he said, until you actually put dollars into it he doesn't think it sits anywhere. Vein added that we passed it, but it was always so we could continue to get federal funds. DeMers agreed saying that in the past they approved it in the Transportation Plan, as kind of hostage situation in that if it wasn't we wouldn't get federal funding. Vein commented that that is what they said but he doesn't agree with it, if we passed a motion we passed a motion and that is where we are at. Kouba said that that is where it sits is that the City Councils need to both agree and move forward in the same direction, and one City Council is still divided on that location and the other is waiting for them to decide and move forward. Vein said that as far as he knows, officially, the City of Grand Forks has selected 32nd Avenue South. DeMers stated that that is the purpose of this RFP, to get this person to actually put concrete things on the table the have to be voted on to actually move the ball forward. He added that all the votes in the past are just carbon copies of the previous votes that just reaffirmed that this is the place, but at any time the council could change and say that it fine but we aren't funding anything, so his point is that hopefully in doing this we will develop actual concrete progress points that we have to hit, so he doesn't think we are any further along than we were 25 years ago except for the fact that we are talking about it more. Vein said, though, that we have done the additional studies, so not only did we select a location we took it through two additional studies and reconfirmed it. DeMers said that he is referring to the big dollar things, like when we have to put plans and specs together, that is going to be a big one. Vein agreed, adding that you can't do the plans and specs until you have a funding source. Halford said, though, that it is hard to ask for or go after funding if you haven't picked a location and are all in agreement with it. DeMers said that they have picked a location, but legislators want it as easy as possible, with the least amount of contention, so if you can show progress has been made; either we are on the verge of plans and specs, or we have the plans and specs, now it is a much easier vote for them to approve funding.

Mock commented that she thinks the problem is really a political problem, it isn't so much a technical problem, it isn't even a funding problem, because it is a political problem first, so you have to get both sides to agree. Vein said that it is a political question that has already been answered, but some politicians don't like it so it gets dragged out, but the fact is we have already made a decision and it has been approved by both the MPO and the City Councils, that is the fact.

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Grasser said that he has a comment; not surprising to anybody beyond today, but he still has a concern, he gets the singular focus on 32nd Avenue, you guys talk about that, but he still thinks it is a strategic error at this point in time not to at least include a discussion about Elks Drive because he still doesn't know politically which one maybe more acceptable to the City or not and by eliminating alternatives, today when you go through an environmental analysis one of the things you do is look at alternatives, and if we are telling somebody there is no alternative, then he kind of questions that a bit. He stated that he also is concerned, we are a planning organization, we should be looking long long term, part of the reason we are in this situation with the bridges is because back in the day, whenever that was, there wasn't enough planning to get the bridge in, then we had a development, or at least more of a development. He said that he is very concerned on Merrifield that right now, as he is perceiving it, we have a number of groups that would be in support of that project; the Country Club would be in support because it is going to help solve their drainage issues; Water Resource District would be in support for some of the same reasons; Chamber of Commerce would be in support of it, so when you start looking at public comment you've got some things that are going to be in support there, so he thinks we could present a real good case to the DOT that this will help alleviate, it is a southend bypass to a degree, which we have all said, and so it is going to help alleviate traffic congestion on Highway 2 for both sides. He added, though, that if we don't move ahead on that project, and he fast forwards fifteen or twenty years from now, and the Country Club has somehow fixed their problem and the Water Resource District somehow fixes their problem; now the County Club has added subdivisions into their golf course, which they are talking about doing, there is additional rural developments, our City development has grown all the way down to Merrifield Road, now we have to start thinking about the groups that are going to start organizing against the project because they are in the proximity, they are going to have everybody from the Interstate all the way through that is going to be coming in and saying that it is damaging their property values, you've heard all those discussions before, and he really thinks it would be a travesty if we allow ourselves to fall into the same trap that got it where we are with the inner-city bridge by not doing sufficient planning so he would like to see us try to carry, in some way shape or form, some of these things together, and he doesn't know how that will ultimately work out even with the States on funding, but he fundamentally feel like it is a strategic problem if we only focus on 32nd, so he is just going to say that now in case it comes out later, that is just the way he feels and he thinks that aligns with both his position as the City Engineer and the MPO Executive Board Member, he thought about it a long time, for years, and he thinks it all fits.

Vetter asked what the role of the MPO is in trying to make that happen, would it be the MPOs job to keep pushing the cities and say that here is your long-term transportation plan, are you looking at this, is that the MPOs job. Grasser responded that he thinks the MPO, just like the discussion we just had, the MPO has kind of taken a lot of those studies as far as they can; you know the Merrifield Bridge has been in every transportation plan since he doesn't know when, we've done a whole bunch of studies in the past on that, if they are both kind of at that stage when somebody needs to start investing dollars on taking that next step for the environmental portion. He added that he we don't want the county coming in for one bridge request, the city coming in for another bridge request, it will just confuse and frustrate the DOTs. DeMers stated that he watches what is going on in Fargo, and they can do about a thousand things at a time, he thinks Grand Forks can do five things, whether they are focused on the interstate or on a bridge,

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all it takes is a little bit of will to say “this is what we are doing”. He added that he feels that Mr. Vein’s point is “we’ve decided it” but then all of a sudden we listen to the minority about we can’t do. He said that he is frustrated by it because; absolutely we should do Merrifield, we should have it ready to go, we should have 32nd ready to go, and do it, we’re not doing it we are just talking and that is the point of why we are trying to get this started.

Rost commented that he had a discussion with Curt Krueen last week and he has the Chamber going and he wanted to get Commissioners going to, but he wants to do to the NDDOT, and he has some support there for the Merrifield Bridge. Grasser said that he thinks the MPOs job is to help those all move concurrently so we can see how they all fit together. Rost stated that he agrees and Mr. Krueen agreed to that we need the two bridges.

Vein stated that the big issue is public safety, as you know, and that is what were alluding to on 32nd; we know the traffic is going to increase on Minnesota and 4th, so what are we going to do. He said he continues to use the analogy of when he first went to work for the City of Grand Forks and they were building Gateway Drive and a child was killed so before the project was done they change ordered in an underpass, that is how that happened, so the idea is, how do we look at all of this pedestrian safety and how are we looking at the vehicle safety, he is focusing on the value of that in town because we don’t have that same problem going out to Merrifield Road, we have benefits he isn’t denying that, but this is the larger safety issue that he feels we have a responsibility to be ahead of. DeMers added that it is the one that we, actually in the cities, control, we don’t control Merrifield.

Vein said that Mr. Grasser does have some good point, there are some that will say not 32nd, but all of sudden we can do Elks Drive, but he is coming into not saying what the location is, it is how do we solve the problem, but the thing is we’ve already decided it so we can continue to redecide if we need to, and again we can continue to do those studies, but he thinks if we do it locally we don’t have to worry about the cost/benefit ratio because we don’t have the cost/benefit at only one location, that is the only one that would be eligible for federal funding because it has the benefits, so that has to play into it as well.

DeMers commented that to answer Ms. Halford’s question, like at this meeting in July, what is the deliverable, what is the outcome, what is the walking orders that we should either anticipate or push for or at least agree to come up with that conclusion, is that something that can be done at that meeting. Halford responded that she would recommend that otherwise you are just going to have a conversation like this where you are just rehashing and going over everything again, which is beneficial, but it is just what we have been doing for so long that she thinks people are ready to take it past that.

Halford stated that there are a few things she would like to hit on to kind of go along with the MPO role; the data and looking at things that she doesn’t think have really been talked about as much as they should be. She said that what they did see in the Grand Forks Land Use Plan is population growth and all of that, they are seeing growth for housing and commercial going all the way to the flood protection in 2050, so that is something to think about in this next plan, where are you going to start growing out to, are you going to the west or that inner-city bridge connecting to the East Side where you are looking at a bedroom community to help with that

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population growth, so those are some things to look at. She said that if you are looking at a bridge at Elks Drive, where is that traffic going to go, it will go along Belmont and then down 32nd, but everything has a cause and effect. Vein commented that that is in the traffic study. Halford added that another thing is that as the population grows the traffic will continue to increase on Minnesota Avenue and there is a school there and a senior center and a park so everything is going to continue to increase more and more, this is just a glimpse in time of where things are at but we need to be aware that as we continue to grow traffic issues will continue to grow and how we respond to it and look into the future and how we handle that needs to be looked at.

DeMers stated that he agrees and that is one question that Mr. Grasser might be the best person to ask, or Mr. Vein you've thought about these things about Grand Forks growth to the south and what is the cost of expanding flood control as you start growing further and further south or is there a cost to it; and to that point he always thought of East Grand Forks as a little bit of a pressure relief valve of that, granted he thinks we get a little too possessive of their residents but it is one community, and if they live in East Grand Forks and work in Grand Forks or live in Grand Forks and work in East Grand Forks it is sort of the same economy and is an economically competitive region. He said that we have always said that Grand Forks is growing so much further and at a more rapid pace, and part of that is the economic and financial aspect, but another part is because the connectivity is just not there for East Grand Forks so if you could release it to the east maybe it would help both communities. He stated that it would be interesting to just think about what is the 50 year plan of levees and extensions. Grasser said that that is what he thinks we should be looking at, looking out 50 years and what that starts to look like because he thinks our planning horizon now is to 2050 and that is not a long time out in the future, so he thinks if you look at that some of these other bridges and concepts are going to start making a little more sense. He added that another thing we have to make sure we identify, because we seem like we are always in arrears on this thing, is nobody want to identify or nobody knows where to put a school and all of a sudden they plunk something next to a major transportation artery and then they are concerned about traffic, and he doesn't know how to fix that but somehow we need to try to have a vision where we kind of capture some of that. DeMers said that if they put it on an arterial the traffic is too busy but if they put it in a neighborhood then it is too congested. Grasser commented that that is exactly right, but every route we have has a school conflict on it at someplace.

Vein stated that we do need to have some idea of what outcomes we need and to some degree he thinks that could be an MPO function, to look at where are today and what we want have; and figure that out because he thinks in the end he would like to know a path forward in the highest level, the question is what decisions will be need to make here to establish a path. DeMers suggested that we need a timeline, when do we think each of these bridges should be built. Vein said that maybe we don't even get into discussion of the bridges yet, but we have a problem and we need a path forward.

Powers said that he has a couple of comments; first he is really proud of himself that he made a motion to have this discussion monthly. He stated that what we did today was a long time coming because we are saying the same thing and we are starting to come closer together, and it

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must have been pretty good because nobody left. He said that what we did today, and he is glad that Ms. Halford did what she did, because we have to keep going on this or we are going to get stagnant.

Information only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. 2021-2022 Annual Work Program Project Update
 - 1) Transit Plan
 - 2) Bike and Pedestrian Plan
 - 3) Street and Highway Plan
 - 4) Pavement Management Plan
- B. AMPO Conference – 2022 Annual Conference, Minneapolis MN October 25-28 – www.ampo.org/news-events/ampo-annual-conference
- C. Approval Of May 14, 2022 To June 10, 2022 Bills/Checks

MOVED BY DEMERS, SECONDED BY ROST, TO APPROVE THE BILLS/CHECKS FOR THE 5/14/22 TO 6/10/22 PERIOD.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT

WARREN STRANDELL, SECRETARY, ADJOURNED THE MAY 15, 2022 MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy McNelis, Office Manager

Grand Forks East Grand Forks MPO
Transaction List by Vendor
 May 14 through June 10, 2022

Type	Date	Num	Memo	Account	Clr	Split	Amount
AFLAC.							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	AFLAC	501	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-395.98
Alerus Financial							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-2,215.86
Liability Check	06/10/2022	EFTPS	45-0388273	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-2,229.56
Bolton & Menk							
Bill	06/02/2022	Inv. #...	Work On Bike...	206 · Accounts Pay...		545 · Transpor...	-1,016.22
Bill Pmt -Check	06/02/2022	7229	Work On Bike...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-1,016.22
Bill	06/07/2022			206 · Accounts Pay...		545 · Transpor...	0.00
Business Essentials							
Bill	06/02/2022	Inv. # ...	Office Supplie...	206 · Accounts Pay...		-SPLIT-	-856.42
Bill	06/02/2022	Inv. #...	Office Supplies	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-17.33
Bill Pmt -Check	06/02/2022	7230		104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-873.75
DayDreams Specialties							
Bill	06/07/2022		Plaque for Je...	206 · Accounts Pay...		-SPLIT-	-131.00
Bill Pmt -Check	06/07/2022	7232	VOID: Clock ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-131.00
Credit	06/07/2022			206 · Accounts Pay...		-SPLIT-	0.00
Bill Pmt -Check	06/07/2022		QuickBooks g...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	0.00
Bill	06/09/2022		Cost To Corre...	206 · Accounts Pay...		711 · Miscellan...	-15.00
Bill Pmt -Check	06/09/2022	7234	Cost To Corre...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-15.00
Fidelity Security Life.							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	7225	50790-1043	104 · Checking	X	210 · Payroll Li...	-8.42
Forum Communications Company							
Bill	06/08/2022	Inv. #...	Public Notice ...	206 · Accounts Pay...		555 · TIP	-249.99
Bill Pmt -Check	06/08/2022	7233	Public Notice ...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-249.99
InfoUSA Marketing, Inc.							
Bill	06/02/2022	Inv. #...	Business Dat...	206 · Accounts Pay...		545 · Transpor...	-2,867.00
Bill Pmt -Check	06/02/2022	7231	Business Dat...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-2,867.00
Kimley-Horn And Associates, Inc.							
Bill	05/19/2022	Inv. #...	Work On TDP...	206 · Accounts Pay...		548 · EGF FT...	-13,102.49
Bill Pmt -Check	05/19/2022	7223	Work On TDP...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-13,102.49
Liberty Business Systems, Inc.							
Bill	06/10/2022	Inv. #...	Contract Bas...	206 · Accounts Pay...		517 · Overhead	-206.00
Bill Pmt -Check	06/10/2022	7235	Contract Bas...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-206.00
LSNB as Trustee for PEHP							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	PEHP		104 · Checking	X	216 · Post-Hea...	-123.75
Madison Nat'l Life							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	7226		104 · Checking		215 · Disability...	-64.74
Mike's							
Bill	05/18/2022		MPO Lunche...	206 · Accounts Pay...		711 · Miscellan...	-100.00
Bill Pmt -Check	05/18/2022	7222	MPO Lunche...	104 · Checking		206 · Accounts...	-100.00
Minnesota Department of Revenue							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking	X	210 · Payroll Li...	-463.00
Liability Check	06/10/2022	MNDOR	1403100	104 · Checking		210 · Payroll Li...	-467.00
Minnesota Life Insurance Company							
Liability Check	05/24/2022	7228		104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-44.46
Nationwide Retirement Solutions							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-510.56
Liability Check	06/10/2022	NWR...	3413	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-510.56
NDPERS							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	NDPE...	D88	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-2,296.08
Liability Check	06/10/2022	NDPE...		104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-2,535.92
QuickBooks Payroll Service							
Liability Check	05/26/2022		Created by P...	104 · Checking	X	-SPLIT-	-6,144.51
Liability Check	06/09/2022		Created by P...	104 · Checking		-SPLIT-	-6,181.24
Standard Insurance Company							
Liability Check	05/27/2022	7227		104 · Checking		217 · Dental P...	-118.88
Teri Kouba							
Bill	05/19/2022		Reimburseme...	206 · Accounts Pay...		-SPLIT-	-665.63
Bill Pmt -Check	05/19/2022	7224	Reimburseme...	104 · Checking	X	206 · Accounts...	-665.63