

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
OF THE GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Training Conference Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ken Vein, Chairman, called the September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:02 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL**

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

Absent were: Gary Malm and Warren Strandell.

Guest(s): David Kuharneko, Grand Forks Engineering

Staff: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Jairo Viafara, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; Teri Kouba, GF/EGF MPO Senior Planner; and Peggy McNelis GF/EGF MPO Office Manager.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Vein declared a quorum was present.

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2018, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***MOVED BY DEMERS, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2018, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT RFP FOR THE SKEWED INTERSECTION STUDY**

Kouba reported that the Request For Proposals is to study kind of that group of intersections, basically, between Mill Road and Washington and along Gateway. She said that there are a lot of things going on, there are a lot of conflicts going on, and so we are just trying to pull together a lot of ideas and a lot of, you know, from the smallest ones to the biggest ones making sure we are in compliance with everything that's needing to be in compliance especially with the railroad going through that area, so we are looking for approval of that.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Vein referred to a map and asked if the blue lines are the boundary of this study, does it go all the way over to 20<sup>th</sup> Street, northeast of 3<sup>rd</sup>. Kouba responded that that is correct, adding that because some of the cueing gets back into that far or close to those two intersections when a train is going through the intersection.

Vein said that there are going to be some changes in the train traffic through there when they do that loop up further to the north, correct. Kouba responded there will and added she doesn't know if right now that the Mill can actually get involved into that loop right now or whether or not that it is a feasible thing for them to do, but they will be trying to land unit trains at the very least in their area so if they are going to bring them up through the mill spur line, that is part of what is being looked at.

Mock asked if the study will look at the timing that they would be bringing trains through. Kouba responded that we can ask BNSF but how much they will agree to work with us on is always going to be key but they will be at the table of course.

Vein asked for a review of the timeline for the study. Kouba stated that we hope to have the study completed next year, and to have the full study done by October of next year. She added that all of the proposals will be due in October of this year.

Vein asked if there was an estimated cost for the proposals. Kouba responded that the budget is \$60,000. Vein asked how that amount was determined. Kouba responded that that is what was reserved in the work program. Vein said that he understands that but on what basis was \$60,000 versus \$100,000. Haugen responded that while it is a complex intersection it is a small focused area so based on prior intersection studies and what work is involved this is what we came up with. Vein said, then, that you used just your judgement, there isn't anything that said that depending on complexities it could be more or it could be less, but that is where you expect to be. Haugen responded that that is correct.

***MOVED BY GRASSER, SECONDED BY MOCK, TO APPROVE THE DRAFT RFP FOR THE SKEWED INTERSECTION STUDY, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Strandell and Malm.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR MN 220 NORTH CORRIDOR STUDY**

Viafara reported that in July the MPO requested authorization from the Technical Advisory Committee and approval from this board to submit a Request for Proposal; and the purpose was seeking consultants assistance to advance the Minnesota 220 North Corridor Study in East Grand Forks. He said that they proceeded and the Request For Proposal was advertised through the North Dakota Department of Transportation website beginning July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Viafara stated that be August 31<sup>st</sup> we had received three proposals from qualified engineering firms; one of them was Alliant Engineering, another was KLJ Engineering and the last one was SRF. He said that those three proposals came to our attention and a committee of seven was established to review the three

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

proposals and to help the MPO with proper guidance with how to move and select one qualified consultant company.

Viafara commented that the qualified firm that was awarded the projects was Alliant Engineering, and today we are here asking you to please authorize our MPO to engage in conversations in terms of negotiations to properly advance this particular project.

Viafara stated that the estimated cost of the project is about \$70,000 and the schedule, the work is scheduled that basically would provide you with some insights of how complex, what is entailed in the advancement of the project exactly to get it to you in your packet.

Viafara commented that something important to distinguish here is that, in your packet also there is kind of a page, number 5, that tells you in a very kind of overall way, some of the concerns that have been identified initially by the consulting company of elements that will drive the overall study.

Viafara said that today the MPO is asking you to please authorize our MPO to engage in a conversation in terms of negotiating the contract for \$70,000 to study the Minnesota 220 North Corridor Study.

Grasser asked if the cost envelope had been opened. Haugen responded that it was opened. Grasser asked what the amount of their estimate was in their scope of work. Haugen responded that it was \$70,000. Grasser said that he was just curious so we are not trying to negotiate down from \$100+ thousand dollars.

Powers asked if the bikepath being constructed was part of this as well, or is this something that the City thought was necessary. Haugen responded that this is an update of a 2008 study that took place on this corridor. He stated that in the 2008 study there was a recommendation to put in that bikepath that is being constructed now. He said that we finally got the funding from the ATP City Subtarget to install it so this was part of the recommendations from the prior study that is now finally being implemented.

***MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT WITH ALLIANT ENGINEERING TO PERFORM THE MINNESOTA 220 NORTH CORRIDOR STUDY, AT A COST NO GREATER THAN \$70,000.00.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Malm and Strandell***

**MATTER OF EGF ADA TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE**

Kouba reported that we hired SRF back in April to do the preparation of an ADA Transition Plan for the City of East Grand Forks.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Kouba commented that SRF, at the end of June beginning of July, came in and did an evaluation and have been working on the standardized working of the main document itself, but the big part was their coming out and evaluating all of the public right-of-way; and they have completed that. She stated that there are some basic things that were checked for compliance and we have several; there are the curb ramps that were looked at separate, there are the sidewalks, and the accessible pedestrian signals. She said that we will take those individual things and come up with an overall compliance. She added that overall East Grand Forks is doing pretty average along the way of implementing and adhering to the ADA accessibility laws that are in place.

Kouba said that now that we have an inventory, the City can do some prioritization, and some prioritization suggestions have been made. She added that once we've talked to some focus groups as well as to get some public input on priorities for getting accessibility in place, as well as presenting to the City Council.

Grasser asked if this kind of suggests where sidewalks should go that may or may not exist, or are they only analyzing where things are existing today. Kouba responded that it is only analyzing what is in place today and accessibility of the right-of-way. Haugen added that the inventory is only what exists today. Vetter asked when the data collected, this summer or last summer. Kouba responded that it was collected at the end of June beginning of July this year. Vetter stated that most of the pedestrian traffic signals were updated last summer, so he finds it kind of funny that most of them aren't compliant. Kouba responded that most of the ones that were updated are along DeMers, and there are some along Central Avenue that are not quite compliant yet. She added that the main city one is just south of the Murray Bridge, so there are a few areas that need updating yet, but we are at 57% so we are halfway there for just the signals, but those are expensive to update as well.

Information only.

**MATTER OF 2045 STREET/HIGHWAY ELEMENT UPDATE**

Haugen reported that most of this is actually, again, information and an update, however we are going to seek some action on resolutions adopting performance measures for the bridge and pavement condition and also for our traffic reliability.

Haugen stated that we are getting pretty close to the end of year, which is when we are required to have our update adopted so our we have been working to finalize that document.

Haugen commented that when it comes to performance measures, we do have the PM3s that we have been talking about most recently. He said that last month we talked about not adopting the State targets because there are some facilities that we don't have so we don't feel that we should adopt a State of Minnesota target if we don't have that facility, and the Interstate target is a prime example.

Haugen stated that when it came to coming up with a number, sometimes we are reflecting a number that is close to one of our States and other times we are reflecting a number that we adopt, a target that is more precise for the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks experience.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Haugen commented that in the case of Interstate Truck Travel Reliability, even though the interstate is only in North Dakota, and our targets are closer to the 1.2 or our performance so far to-date is closer to 1.2, we are, and the Technical Advisory Committee are recommending that we adopt a 1.5, which is actually what the State of Minnesota adopted as their target. He added that the State of North Dakota adopted a target of 3.0, which is extreme and as we discussed at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting all of our surrounding States are even less than 1.5 so we are giving ourselves a little bit of leniency or some slack room for construction or weather, which based on this data can have up to 1.5.

Haugen stated that for the rest of Interstate Reliability North Dakota is 85%, Minnesota is 80%, and our data shows 100% today so staff is recommending 90% be the MPO Target being it is not mirroring one state or the other state, so we are trying to find a happy ground between what the States are doing and what our data is showing our performance is.

Haugen said that on the Non-Interstate Travel, here we have facilities in both States; North Dakota is at 85%, Minnesota is at 75% and our data is showing us to be closer to 85%, so we are suggesting we set a target of 85% for that.

Vein asked if, on any one of those, there is a value to trying to make sure it is attainable versus having something that is too tight, or too difficult to reach; what are we trying to really accomplish here. Haugen responded that we are trying to find that middle ground. He added that we are trying to find a target that possibly we won't be able to achieve, but if we do get to that level we have some bullets in our gun, if you will, to go to our partner agency and point out that our data is saying that we are getting below our target so we need to have a discussion about how we can get back to our target. He said, though, that if we set the target to a level where it is too easy to maintain and keep than we have less or not bullets, but if we set it so it is too hard to achieve than we are shooting ourselves in the foot because we are setting an target that is unachievable. Vein asked if there would be penalties if you don't hit your targets or if you go over your targets. Haugen explained that these performance measures don't have a direct penalty clause to them like the safety measures do, or the bridge and pavement ones that we will be discussing next.

Haugen reported that also for the MPO these would be four-year targets. He pointed out that on the State side it is a two-year target, a four-year target. He explained that for the two year targets the State is required to submit a report to the feds after two years, and at that time they have the ability to adjust their target based on what their data is telling them for two years. He added that if the State adjusts their target after the two years, even though ours is four years, we are supposed to be working in close coordination with the States so if they are adjusting their target we may want to revisit our target after two years, but officially we are adopting a four-year target. Vein asked if the States have any control over what we choose. Haugen responded that it is a local decision. He added that they have been cooperatively engaging with us as we discuss this, the two States representatives at our Technical Advisory Committee meeting voted for the recommendation so there shouldn't be a problem at the State level.

Haugen said that for the PM2, just to go back to the bridge and pavement conditions; here we are either adopting or are recommending that we adopt the State's targets. He stated that he knows we don't have

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

a facility on the Minnesota side, we aren't defaulting to the States, we are ?? the North Dakota target; so the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are recommending, and in your packet are the resolutions adopting these targets. He said that they are seeking, if the board is willing to adopt these resolutions today; we do have officially until the middle of November to make a decision on these targets, however as part of our Long Range Transportation Plan, we are trying to get this included in the draft so that we will roll out here in October as a preliminary draft So that is why we are seeking a decision today.

Haugen stated that it might be appropriate to see if the board would be willing to consider adopting these two resolutions.

Vein asked if the two resolutions are included in the packet. Haugen responded they are. He referred to a slide showing the resolution template they used and explained that it has been updated to reference the specific Subpart C of CFR 490, and it identified exactly where the targets are that the Grand Forks MPO is adopting. He added that even though we are adopting these we will continue to work and to help both States achieve their targets.

***MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE ADOPTING THE PM2,  
PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITION PERFORMANCE TARGETS, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Malm and Strandell.***

***MOVED BY VETTER, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE ADOPTING THE PM3,  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM TARGETS, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None.***

***Abstain: None.***

***Absent: Malm and Strandell.***

Haugen reported that there is a deadline of October 1<sup>st</sup> in which we should have been adopting transit asset targets however our Transit Operators have not presented to us, and we have to work with them on reaching those target levels, so all of us will be missing that date of October 1<sup>st</sup>. He said, though, that he expects that at our next meeting we will have those targets before you for consideration.

Haugen stated that the last thing we have on this is, our current Transportation Plan does have a performance target for CO2 Emissions from the tailpipe. He said that we have updated the data to show where we've been and how we are progressing. He commented that our target in our 2040 plan was to see that by the year 2040 there was a 10% reduction in our 2007 levels. He said that between 2006 and 2010 we saw a large reduction across the board for the most part, but between 2010 and 2015 we saw a relatively substantial growth in the vehicle miles traveled compared to our last reporting period,

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

however we also had an improved mile per gallon in our vehicles, so our net effect on CO2 reduction was improved, just not as great as before. He stated that ultimately we are still making progress towards achieving this target, however our rate of reaching that target has slowed down in our last reporting period, so at our next meeting we will likely have a recommendation on how to approach this in the 2045 plan.

DeMers asked how that data is acquired. Haugen responded that it is a calculation based primarily off of the vehicle miles traveled in our metro area. He explained that the vehicle miles traveled is also a computation of each State DOT's annual traffic counts, but only at key spots, not everywhere, and then they extracted that out as to what the annual vehicle miles traveled are. DeMers said, though, that if everybody in Grand Forks bought a Prius, there would be no way for that to be reflected. Haugen responded that they go with the vehicle registrations, every vehicle has to be registered to a location, and they use that to calculate the fleet miles per gallon calculation, so they have access to the data that is there, and they mine it and come up with these statistics and so on. Vein said, though, that you could have a lot of transportation from outside the City that's going through the City. Haugen agreed, but added that it is the miles as they travel through, City miles, that they are in the MPO area that is being calculated, not if they started in Pisek. Vein commented that what he is saying is that the data wouldn't be just for Grand Forks, but you would have the number of miles for everyone going through.

Vetter asked if we were doing anything pro-actively to lower this. Haugen responded that the primary thing that we have done is implementing the Signal Coordination Plans in the past five or six years, especially on the Grand Forks side. He added that a lot of our other efforts would be when we try to add turning lanes and such to improve the flow of traffic, which in turn improves the CO2 emissions. He said that we implemented a new bus routing system and added service to that to try to drive more usage of the transit system; we are adding bike facilities, sidewalk facilities for other mode of traffic than just single occupant vehicles, so we are bits and pieces pecking away at it, however we don't have major projects that would really hit or VMT as the future bridge discussion will inform us about.

Haugen reported that the next portion of this update is on Investment Direction. He stated that a lot of our investment is actually provided to us by our Feds and States, through their planning documents and direction.

Haugen said that we did go out and get some public input, more for direction, but really our driving force is what our federal regulations and our State plans tell us, because we have to be consistent with our direction. He stated that that this is just trying to give some relationship with our goals and how they relate to the federal performance measures.

Haugen referred to a slide with diagrams showing public input results. He stated that at two separate times back in August of 2017 we were at the Empire and we also had an active website where a Wiki-Map tool was used to gather input from the public; and in January of 2018 we asked people if they had \$100 how they would split it up into these different categories, where their investments would be, and the main one was investing in maintaining our existing infrastructure.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Haugen commented that investment scenario is really an investment scenario that looks at state of good repair and repaving, state of good repair. He explained that it is just identifying from our revenue sources the type of investments and how it shapes out for those investments. He pointed out that this is a different way of showing where we get the revenue and how it is split between safety, state of good repair (interstate), state of good repair (non-interstate), ND Main Street, and local projects.

Haugen stated that at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting last week we distributed a list of projects for the four main agencies we have. He said that since then we have been doing some adjustments to the list and we are still working on identifying what projects we have for the revenue we have available, so he isn't ready to show that list to this body at this time, but essentially all of our revenue is going into maintaining what we have per our federal emphasis in our State Plan.

Haugen reported that we did have a tool that used, and shared with the Technical Advisory Committee, and asked for input on as to all these other projects that likely won't be funded, how should they be prioritized, how should they be ranked or scored based on the goals and objectives we've drafted for this plan. He referred to a slide and pointed out that it lists the projects that rose to the top; and the only two exceptions were that we added the river crossings because we have been spending a lot of time talking about them, and because Merrifield and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are in the current 2040 plan that is why they were identified in this list as well.

Discussion on the proposed Point Bridge Approach project ensued.

Haugen stated that the next set of slides is bringing you up-to-date on the river crossing analysis. He said that since our last meeting we talked about benefit/cost and we had questions for Polk County, and he and Warren Strandell talked on Monday and he has been talking with his board about where they sit on the Merrifield Bridge location, if they support it or not, and he said that Polk County is comfortable with the two bridge locations as currently identified in the 2040 Plan, Merrifield and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. He added that they aren't overly concerned about which one comes first, our current language has been to try to get Merrifield first and then see if we still need one at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue location, but Polk County is flexible as to which one comes first.

Haugen said that a second question he had for Mr. Strandell was, because on the Minnesota side the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue location has some road authority issues, and would most likely road jurisdiction would be Polk County, where do they sit with this location and his response was that if that came to be the only location where an additional bridge could be sited, Polk County could rearrange its County state aid system, or add mileage and make it happen.

Haugen stated that one thing that Mr. Strandell did note though is it is conditional that we've always been, and the travel demand models would be showing that an extension of Rhinehart becomes the most traveled north/south roadway, so the County is requesting that direct linkage between 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge location and Rhinehart not be allowed. He explained that Mr. Strandell feels that the Hartsville Road, is a better road to begin with even though it is a gravel road, but they feel that the Hartsville Road is a better road to try to get that north/south travel on. He added that they discussed that, yes, the

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

intersection with Bygland Road was truncated when Greenway Boulevard crossed Bygland Road so even though it doesn't have a direct connection into Bygland Road the County still feels, from their perspective that would be the way that 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be tied into their County Highway system.

DeMers asked how they would bypass Rhinehart Drive, build a bridge over it; you're not turning left on Rhinehart. Haugen responded that it would be like what they did on Bygland and 14<sup>th</sup> where they cul-de-saced 14<sup>th</sup> so it didn't intersect with Bygland, so the solution might be to just cul-de-sac Rhinehart. He added that there has been a lot of communication from the residents on Rhinehart desiring something like that as well.

Haugen reported that the other information is really to update you on the benefit/cost ratios based on the discussion we had at your last meeting.

Haugen referred to slides illustrating the benefit/cost information and went over them briefly.

Haugen pointed out that the first slide shows all five locations. He pointed out that they are significantly different than they were the last time you saw these. He explained that they went up, however one didn't go up quite as much as the others.

Haugen commented that the primary reason for 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue's not having a very good benefit/cost is because we are adding miles and adding miles to the travel time, while the rest of them are reducing those, but 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue is attracting enough local traffic that is traveling further and take a longer time to get around.

Haugen stated that they did hold a public open house and had our two special interest groups attend it; the Merrifield supporters were there and the Grand Forks Historical Society was there as well.

Haugen said that they did offer to the Grand Forks Alderman whose wards are along the river that if they were to hold ward meetings, that he would be open to attending and try to bring those people up to date, particularly with the river crossing issues.

Vetter commented that we made a motion last month to eliminate the high bridge options and he is wondering if we might want to do the same with the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue option as the benefit/cost ratios are so low that we are never going to get any money to do that one anyway, so he is wondering if at this point we wouldn't want to eliminate that one from our study also. Powers suggested that he would like to see the 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue option eliminated, and maybe even the Elks Drive option as well.

Vein said that he is wondering, you know we added them all so that we would get a full review of every option, and he feels that since we've gone this far doesn't it make sense to keep them in even though it feels pretty logical that it is going to fall out, that way we can tell everybody we did study every option, so maybe we should leave it in the study even though we will get probably to a result we anticipate, especially seeing these numbers. DeMers asked what work is left on this portion of the study. Haugen responded that we could take the work further and identify if there are other costs downstream that you

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

want to include as the project cost in addition to what the actual bridge crossing would be in the immediate touch-down points, that would be kind of the next step. Vein commented that for Grand Forks, from a political standpoint, we've studied everything equally and we've that in there is what he is thinking. Powers asked how long you want to study it. Vein responded that when we are done with this study we will be able to, for the next five to ten years say, that we did look at that and it did not have the benefit/cost ratio that we were looking for, so it was dropped.

Grasser stated that at this point this has been more of a technical analysis, but at some point do we actually have public input; something in there that says neighborhood we are planning on putting a bridge in come and give us your input because right now he thinks it has been a little too fluffy for the neighborhoods to probably get really engaged; he thinks they got excited earlier on but now it seems like it has backed off and that public input, he is curious, is that part of this process at all. Haugen responded that that is why he is trying to set up the ward meetings with the Aldermen that are in the wards that would be affected by a bridge. Grasser asked if they would help the Ward Aldermen with direct mailings to the people that are affected along the route. Haugen responded that that would be done by the City's Public Info Department's job.

Vein reported that Mr. Grasser and himself and a number of people had discussions with the Fargo/Moorhead City Engineers on the diversion project and the impacts downstream on both the 100 Year and the 500 Year elevations, and trying to figure out what the true impacts are and if there are any litigation issues that we may need; and one of them that we kind of talked about was having a high level bridge, that one of the mitigation issues could be a high level bridge in Grand Forks somewhere, and if that is true for him that could bring one of these locations in, or at least the Merrifield location could be a high level bridge.

Grasser commented that we can identify that there are impacts downstream, .07 feet which is probably about an inch with the 100-year flood, but there's .5 feet which is probably about 7 inches with the 500-year flood. He said that they are working with the East Grand Forks City Engineer, the two City Engineers are basically working together for the most part, and they are going through an analysis right now to try to figure out the impacts to our transportation system; unfortunately when he looks at it it is probably less than his original thought, but be that as it may there are still going to be some impacts there. He added that he thinks that part of the crux of the letter is going to be that we are seeing some impacts, there should be some mitigation involved, and philosophically he thinks that is what is going to be the main topic of the letter, but following that on the transportation side, which is what Mr. Vein is talking about, they were setting the groundwork at mitigation dollars brought for a high level bridge because at roughly a 50-year flood elevation all of our bridges are closed, every one of them so we don't have a way to get back and forth, so if we can tie this back to other funding sources for mitigation, maybe we can overcome some of those additional dollar amounts in having a high level bridge, that way we always have a connection between the two communities.

Grasser stated that with that they are just kind of laying the groundwork for whatever value mitigation wise that we have, we are kind of planting that seed, and so at some point in time we may want to come back, irrespective of the dollars, and say should a bridge be a high level bridge; whether that impacts the location or not he doesn't know, but he doesn't think we should totally write it off.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Vein commented that they just had this conversation a few days ago so it is just brand new, but he did talk to the City of Fargo because he was on that task force that the Governor put together, and he really wanted this body to be aware that now that they have the Draft Environmental document out for review, we need to make comments if in fact there is something that needs to be done. He added that he has been supportive of flood protection, but he also wants to know what impacts there may be and anything that is negative needs to be mitigated as part of their project, and so many people would look just at the 100-year flood, and that is pretty minimal, and he doesn't have much of an issue with 7/100's, but 58/100's at the 500-year; which really surprised him because he thought that at a higher level flood there would be less of an impact than you would at the lower 100-year flood elevation, but he always felt that we needed to have freeboard, and the idea was that we would have more retention in the future that would actually enhance our level of protection, not to have it go the other direction.

Grasser said that, piggy-backing onto that, the reason it is probably elevated is, a bigger deal for us is that in general terms the 500-year flood that we had runs very close to the top of our existing levees, so if you've 7 inches on top of that now you're at the top of the levees, potentially. He added that their data says that that doesn't happen, but he is leery about that data, but in any event when we are that close to the top of levee, 7 inches is a big deal.

Vein stated, again, that this brings back the question, when we talk about bridge locations, should we not be looking at at least one location that is a high-level bridge. DeMers commented that he thinks that everybody has kind of said that the Merrifield location would be the right spot for a high-level bridge, for one thing there is little development out there so the footprint of a high-level bridge would have the least impact there, thus the least cost. DeMers stated, though, that the problem with a high level bridge, on the East Grand Forks side, and even at Merrifield, you end up with the question of how do you get to the bridge because Highway 2 goes under water goes under water before our levees do, and although he can't imagine that much water, the point is if you build a high level bridge you have to be able to get to it.

Discussion ensued.

Vein said that for the discussion today it is good to have the communication and knowledge base, but the question just comes back for this study, would we show something other than a low-level bridge at a location, because we've already decided to take them out and you only have all five locations being studied for a low-level bridge. Haugen responded that there are degrees of low, and the Merrifield one is the exception to the other locations as their approaches aren't designed to even meet the high bridge level, but the Merrifield's whole structure is designed or conceptualized to meet the high bridge level. DeMers asked what level the others are at. Haugen responded that he can't answer that off the top of his head. Vein stated that they would be similar to what we said the walk bridges are, correct. Haugen responded that conceptually that is what we are saying. DeMers said that some of those are better than the bridges; on the north end didn't they say they were going to run ambulances across there if needed. Grasser responded that they physically could but that is a lower level than the Point Bridge; he thinks they go under at the 35ish range, the Point Bridge goes under at the 44ish range, the Sorlie goes under at the 45ish range, and the Kennedy goes under at the 50ish range.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Vein stated that what he heard is that the bridge itself, the structure itself is high enough even though it is listed as a low level bridge; the approaches on both sides, and again where you connect into all of that would be tied into that, so would you have to do road raises just so that it doesn't go under water, you would have to have it usable or it wouldn't do either community any good unless it can connect to something. DeMers agreed, adding that that is why 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, if you went high or low is pretty much the end for East Grand Forks, and Merrifield is the end for Grand Forks.

Vein commented that he would think there would be two advantages for a high bridge; one would be the connection between the two communities, and the other would be the transportation system of potentially Highway 2 through town and continue to go east; we need to have some of that because otherwise that closes that off, although we do have the advantage of being able to go down to the Thompson Bridge.

Grasser asked if the study indicated; you said Merrifield tied into a Minnesota Highway, is that Highway dry then at the 100-year event. Haugen responded that it was dry. Grasser asked if it was dry by a lot. Haugen responded that part of that was also the diversion of Cole Creek and using fill from a diversion ditch.

Vein commented that this is helpful for him to be somewhat aware of the Merrifield bridge having the capability of being a high bridge and to be able to leave the rest of the options having a low bridge.

Haugen stated that at some point we will need direction on how to write up the plan; again, the current plan says that "not for construction purposes, but to preserve the right-of-way, etc. to prevent development, hinging on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue or Merrifield Road"; that is how the current write up is and if we are going to change that we need to know how to write that in the plan, but if you're going to keep it that way they will just carry over that language. Vein said that the one question he did want to bring up today was, from a timeline perspective where and at what meeting is this decision going to get made. Haugen responded that the timeline, working backwards from the end of December, so at your December MPO Board meeting is when we would anticipate this body adopting the Long Range Transportation Plan, to get to that point we submit it to both City Council's for their consideration as an amendment into their City Planning Documents, in order for that to happen we have to get it to them in October, so at your next board meeting it is our hope that we will have a draft plan for you to give preliminary approval to and then we would push that out for it's 60-day comment period and consideration by both cities. He added that we also be going to both counties, which we haven't done in the past to get some incorporation of our document into their county plans. He explained that in going through each City's process and public hearings for consideration of the document for each city plan, however they do it, and then in December you will have all that action and comment coming back to you to adopt a final document.

Vein said that for him there are two critical times, when the MPO Board itself makes a recommendation and then when it is final at the end of December; and he thought he heard that a draft plan recommendation will be submitted to the MPO Board at its next meeting. Haugen responded that that is their hope, that is what they are working diligently towards. Mock asked if it goes to the City Councils

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

before you make that recommendation, or does it go through this body before it goes to the councils. Haugen responded that it would go through this body before it gets formally presented for each City to consider it as an amendment into their City Planning document. Mock asked what happens if the City Councils don't agree with what this body is recommending. Haugen responded that that has happened in the past; this body adopts a plan; each council adopts a plan; for federal purposes the plan that this body adopts is the plan that must be consistent.

Vein commented that we will see what happens, if we approve one thing; we've studied this before and now we've studied it again, and it is more of a political decision and we are just going to have to have a way to move forward. DeMers added that the difference is that both Cities have grown to the south even more, we just keep moving further south. Vetter stated that it is actually getting to be less and less of a political issue because the impacts on our infrastructure is getting more and more, and the bridges have gotten bad ratings and if we don't do something they will be in the "F" category so we have to do something, it is to the point now where we can't just sit back and say, well we'll wait five years until we update our plan again and then it will still be out in the 40-year plan, it can't be in the 40-year plan anymore it's got to be in the 10-year plan because traffic patterns are affected on both sides of the river.

Grasser said that when you build a bridge it is going to be here forever, essentially, and the cost/benefit ratios, he is assuming are based on the 2040 Land Use Plan, and he would think that travel demands and things like that would be in there, is there any way of projecting out; as the City's both grow south those cost/benefit ratios are going to change, maybe favoring more the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Merrifield both, he doesn't know, but is there a value, should we look at what these benefits or these cost benefit ratios might theoretically be in 100-years. He stated that we are catching a point in time as we are growing south. Haugen responded that that is correct, but added that just so you are aware, in the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan, even at 2045 they don't show development much past 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. DeMers commented that that is without a bridge in there though. Kouba commented that she believes they did look at briefly, and even with a bridge it wouldn't go out that far. Haugen added that they also are promoting development to the north out by the golf course as well.

Information only.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. 2018 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that the 2018 Annual Work Program Project Update is included for review.

- b. Grand Forks Downtown Transportation Plan Update

Haugen reported that the board authorized the Finance Committee to take action on the Grand Forks Downtown Transportation Study, and they did meet and did execute a contract with KLJ. He explained that it is more of a parking and special event parking management study, so that is about to get underway.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

c. 2019-2020 Annual Unified Work Program Project Solicitation

Haugen reported that next month we will also be presenting to you our next two year work program which will identify what studies and activities we will be doing so hopefully if you have any ideas for projects you will contact your City Staff to get that through your processes.

d. Bill Listing For The 7/14/18 to 8/17/18 Period

Haugen reported that the list of bills for the August 17, 2018 to September 14, 2018 July 14, 2018 to August 17, 2018 period was included in the packet for your review.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY DEMERS, SECONDED BY VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2018, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:15 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy McNelis,  
Office Manager