

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
OF THE GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Wednesday, February 20th, 2019 – 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks City Hall Training Room**

CALL TO ORDER

Clarence Vetter, Chairman, called the February 20th, 2019, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:00 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

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

Absent were: Ken Vein, Al Grasser, and Marc DeMers.

Guest(s) present: Michael Huot, Property Owner and David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering.

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

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Vetter declared a quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 23RD, 2019, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY MOCK, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 23RD, 2019 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF ANNUAL SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Viafara reported that included in the packets is information that indicates the actual condition, in terms of very fatal accidents and those serious injuries for the two regions. He said that this information is compiled for the two regions, for Minnesota and for the portion of North Dakota planning area for the MPO.

Viafara stated that we are analyzing today the one correspondence to the Year 2016 and 2017. He said that, as you can see the number of fatal accidents for the Year 2016 is zero and for the Year 2017 it is the number 2; and the number of incapacitation injuries is the number 3 on the Year 2016 and 13 on the

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Year 2017; so with this in mind these are the stats that we want to analyze and produce at the report that you will see in a minute.

Viafara said that before that he just wants to introduce a topic by telling you that the MPOs are required by law to adopt targets for defined performance measures. He added that targets are established by the DOTs and the MPO for the following areas: 1) safety; 2) transit asset management; 3) system performance 4) bridge condition; and 5) pavement condition. He stated that today we want to analyze just the ones that correspond to safety.

Viafara commented that the safety area is made up of five categories. He said that we have the number of fatalities, we have the rate of fatalities, we have the number of serious injuries, we have the rate of serious injuries, and we have the number of non-motorized fatalities and the number of non-motorized serious injuries; so these are the stats that we will seek.

Viafara reported that the analysis entails the analysis of the serious injuries; calculation of five years running average; and the analysis of vehicle miles traveled for the region. He added that all the analysis is based on the number 327,000,000 vehicle miles traveled, so with that in mind we can now proceed to the table.

Viafara referred to the table in the staff report, and went over the information briefly. He explained that the table was modified with the input that they received at the latest Technical Advisory Committee meeting, so taking into consideration what we are doing here is setting the targets for the planning area for the Year 2019.

Viafara pointed out that the number of fatalities for the Year 2019 will be 3 or fewer; the rate, which is taking 100,000,000 vehicle miles traveled, will be 0.599 or lower; and the number of serious injuries will be 15 or fewer; and the rate will be 5.296 million vehicle miles traveled or lower, and the number of non-motorized will be 4 or fewer. He said, then, that these are our new targets for the Year 2019.

Viafara referred to page 4 of the packet, and commented that when we proceed to do the analysis with the five year rolling averages, we can see the numbers and this is where those numbers that he just went over are coming from. He stated that staff is requesting the board approve these targets for the Year 2019.

MOVED BY ROST, SECONDED BY STRANDELL, TO APPROVE THE YEAR 2019 SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE YEAR 2019, AS PRESENTED.

Mock asked what happens if we don't meet the targets we are setting. Haugen responded that at the statewide level, if the State does not meet its identified targets there is a penalty clause, but for the MPOs there isn't so for us it is just a matter of we set targets, did we meet them or not, and if we didn't what can we do to meet them next time.

Viafara commented that it is important to notice that this target is set in good faith as a contribution to the overall rating of the States.

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Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Strandell, Rost, , and Mock.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Vein, Grasser, and DeMers.

Haugen commented that these are the only targets that we have to annually address; the rest of these targets that Mr. Viafara identified are targets that are on a different cycle, so this is the only one that has an annual target setting process.

MATTER OF UND SHUTTLE/CAT MERGER STUDY

Haugen reported that we received three quotes for this study; if you recall last month you authorized to proceed through the quote process. He explained that our normal process in the past would be to use a qualification-based selection, but this time we were able to include quotes as part of the selection process because there is a threshold that this study cost is less than.

Haugen stated that for all three proposals the selection committee was able to examine the cost as well. He said that the committee met Tuesday morning and are recommending that we engage SRF Consulting to do this study.

Haugen reported that the contract cost would be up to \$40,000, and SRF's quote was \$39,916.00. He added that all of the quotes came in right around that 39,900+ area, so the quotes didn't really help separate the selection process. He said that one of the strong points that SRF made in the process was that they will first tackle what the cost will be for everyone to have this merger take place, and if that cost makes sense than they will proceed with the study, but if the cost doesn't make sense then there isn't any sense in continuing to try to figure out the route structure and everything else; so with that the Selection Committee and staff are recommending that this body authorize the contract with SRF to do this study up to the \$40,000 budgeted amount.

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY ROST, TO APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE
EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH SRF TO DO THE CAT/UND SHUTTLE MERGER
STUDY, NOT TO EXCEED THE BUDGETED AMOUNT OF \$40,000.***

Vetter said one question he would have is if they go through the financial end of the study and determine that it isn't feasible to go forward, is the contract then for a lesser amount. Haugen responded that they can stop the contract so just the work they complete to that point would be billable against the contract. Haugen added that it is a multi-month contract, and is deliverable at the end of April.

Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Strandell, Rost, and Mock.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Vein, Grasser, and DeMers.

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MATTER OF DRAFT ITS REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE UPDATE

Viafara reported that staff is seeking approval to execute a contract to engage A.T.A.C. to proceed with the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks ITS Regional Architecture Update. He added that this update is for the Year 2019. He said that this project is updated every five years, and the MPO is required to update it, and we strive to harmonize with the progress of what is happening in North Dakota DOT and what the Minnesota DOT is doing with their ITS plan. He pointed out that in our case one has to be mindful of the fact that we are dealing with two different States, and each one of them has its own Architectural ITS design.

Viafara stated that the key objectives for this particular update include: 1) the need for us to address changes in the region; 2) changes in the stakeholders, 3) changes in the scope of service and issues with the deployment of ITS projects in the region; and 4) to address changes in the National ITS Architecture.

Viafara said that it is with this kind of objectives in mind that you will see what kind of a tentative group of stakeholders has been put forth for consideration, in part because some of these stakeholders deal with emergency management issues, and a vital component of the ITS upgrade is also to update in terms of emergency management issues.

Viafara commented that you will see here the contract that we are bring forward for your consideration, and there are some highlights. He said that those highlights correspond to comments made by members of the Technical Advisory Committee in order for us to improve the text and the overall aim of the project. He stated that one of the comments was that they would like each one of these facts to be subject to review by the project advisory group, by the TAC, and also the MPO Executive Board, so all the text being updated will go through that process.

MOVED BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH A.T.A.C. TO PERFORM THE ITS REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE UPDATE.

Vetter said that Intelligent Transportation System, that deals with how traffic is moving and monitoring that, is that correct. Viafara responded that there are several issues there; one of them is the coordination of the emergency management systems, and the other one, depending on the size and the scope of the system to determine issues with the speed, with how traffic is moving for us in some regions. He commented that he used to work in another region where they had a center where they could basically control the level of congestion management right from the kind of ITS technology, so there are way too many implications in our case, the advent of this connected vehicles is also very pressing, so in part part of the architecture is to accommodate, as soon as they are coming on the ground, to accommodate their movements.

Haugen said that it involves emergency management, transit, vehicle movement; and part if it is just data collection and data archiving, and other parts is just making sure that communication equipment can communicate with one another. He added that there are several packages that are available to us, and we

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can pick and choose which packages are good for Grand Forks/East Grand Forks, being consistent with what both States have done, so it isn't just about vehicles and people, it is also about data collection and making sure that communication networks can relay information to each other. He said that, as Mr. Viafara highlighted, there is now an automated vehicle component to it that we will have to include as well.

Haugen referred to the MPO website and pointed out that our current ITS Regional Architecture document is available if you would like to get a little more familiar with it.

Voting Aye: Vetter, Powers, Strandell, Rost, and Mock.

Voting Nay: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Vein, Grasser, and DeMers.

MATTER OF US2/US81 INTERSECTION STUDY UPDATE

Haugen reported that this is an update agenda item that does not require any action from the board, as are the next several items.

Haugen said that, if you recall, we initiated this study last year and retained KLJ to assist us as the consultant on it and it involves looking at the intersection of Gateway Drive and North Washington. He stated that a Steering Committee was formed consisting of agency staff members and also neighborhood representatives, property owners, and business owners in that area. He said that they met for the first time last week and on our website we have a page where you can get further information.

Haugen referred to a map and pointed out the study area for this update and stated that one of the key issues is the skew that this intersection presents; as well as the fact that the Mill Spur is in very close proximity to it and also 5th Street (or Mill Road) is also in very close proximity to it.

Haugen commented that we do know that contributing to the growth in traffic that we are forecasting is growth in train traffic. He explained that the North Dakota Mill is expanding its capacity. He said that they did just finish some capacity expansion, but do have plans already to expand even further; so in the short term it means that they are going to start bringing their grain in by unit trains rather than how it is currently brought in which is by trucks. He stated that with the unit train being 110 cars long, moving at five miles and hour on the Mill Spur, this intersection will be further impacted due to the longer closure for these trains. He said that this is actually be complete closure because the relief routes will all be closed at the same time as well because of the size of this train.

Haugen stated that what they are finding out right now is, and this is kind of a new thing that perhaps we didn't do in the past, but that is now part of our good planning process, is that we are looking to see if some of these existing traffic signals even meet warrants as to whether they should even be there, and what we discovered is that the North 20th Street traffic signal, according to the warrants that are set for traffic signals, does not meet any of them so part of our analysis will be what do we do without this

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traffic signal or if it is needed in the future. He added that 3rd Street also does not meet warrants currently, but we did ask the consultant to review that analysis, in part because the analysis they did for us assumed a lot of the school traffic was able to use the underpass, but we know that there are snow issues at various times that make it unusable, and one of the warrants for a traffic signal is for school pedestrian crossings, so they are going to relook at that.

Haugen commented that as we assume growth in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks this corridor will also grow in traffic volumes; by 2030 we show we will have gone from 22,000 to 28,000, and by 2040 we will be up to 32,000, so we are seeing considerable growth on the corridor and that means that even with that growth though in the future we aren't showing that the 20th Street traffic signal meets the warrants, even with the current turning movements that are there and the predicted future turning movements, but as land development or redevelopment occurs that might change.

Haugen stated that from a volume point of view the signal at 3rd Street does not meet warrants, but again we are looking at the school crossing issue to do that, but we also noticed that our level of service gets to be below our level of service D allowance and so we start having backed up traffic that spills back beyond these other traffic signals without the train traffic.

Haugen reported that right now some of the information we have regarding the train traffic we used a couple of months of traffic signal preemption, where trains preempt the traffic signals to put them to all red, and so we know there are roughly three to five trains a day on that track and the average closure time is 2.5 minutes, although some are longer and some are less; and one of our concerns is that with the blockage emergency responders do have unavailable routes.

Haugen stated that one of the things that they were able to do, and that is that this information is to give us some sense of how traffic is congested without trains, and then how much more congested it is when train traffic is introduced and how it progresses. He referred to a drawing illustrating this and went over it briefly.

Haugen commented that we do have some pedestrian facilities along the corridor that are lacking in some ADA compliance, and we also have some bike facilities adjacent to the corridor that lacks direct connect to the rest of the bike network that will be part of what will be looked at as well.

Haugen stated that ultimately we are finding out that really the current traffic signals in place, two of them are questionable as to whether or not they should remain, and we know that in the future our volumes are going to increase vehicle wise, but also we know that train traffic will increase and will create more conflict between the two modes; so as part of our working relationship with the committee and consultant we will try to see how we can alleviate some of that traffic congestion and traffic reliability issues that are being caused by our signal systems and also by the change in particularly the train traffic on the corridor.

Strandell asked, in addition to the Gateway numbers and such there, does this study include anything that would have to do with how people, when trains are present, would start using the Sorlie

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Bridge. He wondered, given the capacity concerns of the Sorlie now, what could be more expense of it. Haugen responded that he would have to get an answer to that, but his initial reaction is probably not in a direct way, they have not asked the consultant to do that in a direct way. He added that their travel demand model does it to some degree. He added that the travel demand model is identifying that the Sorlie Bridge, in the future even today, is very congested and the work that is going to start this summer will really not build out to relieve a lot of that congestion, so the model is already curtailing traffic from using the Sorlie Bridge, but they haven't introduced the unit train traffic to the model yet.

Powers asked if there was a timeframe on how long a train can block an intersection; he thought 2 minutes and 30 seconds was kind of short. Rost suggested it was 15 minutes. Haugen said that he was going to say 10 minutes, but that is a completely stopped train for that whole duration. He added that a lot of it is very slow rolling train traffic, so it is legally able to block it longer than that because it is moving, and right now some of the Mill trains that service the grain elevators along the Glasston Sub, or even the coal train that runs up to the Minto Coal Yard, those will block Gateway Drive 20 minutes or more at times, but they are moving and that is just the reality of what they create.

Haugen stated that, to get back to the prior question, one of the strategies is to look to see if we have been; and part of the construction that has been going on, if you go on some of the rural base to the north, you will notice that there are now message boards being placed there to let people know that there is train blockage and to use alternative routes, and one of our strategies is to inform people further out that Gateway Drive at Mill Road will be blocked and to use an alternative routes, so part of our strategy might be to look at some of those corridors like the Sorlie Bridge Crossing or others to advise people to get around a different way.

Haugen commented that how Unit Trains operate is, they can't break up the train in the yard, that train has to be connected all the way through to the end, which is the Mill; they arrive when they arrive and they don't give much advance notice, they have 16 to 24 hours to unload and allow the train to leave the yard. He said that right now there isn't any nighttime activity on the Mill Spur, but this Unit Train might introduce nighttime activity. He said that initially the North Dakota Mill was talking maybe one or two trains per month, some months there might be zero and some months there might be three, just depends on product availability and need, but again that is based on the current capacity but they have stated that they will be adding more capacity to produce even more product in the future so they will need even more raw material delivered.

Vetter suggested that another alternative would be to take Mill Road all the way up and then come back down on Washington. Haugen agreed, adding that there have been other studies that have looked at this in the past and they came up with some concepts, but the crux of the problem is that a lot of the concepts were grade separation type projects that would cost \$20 plus million dollars, and as we know from our recent Street and Highway Plan we don't have that kind of revenue lying around looking for projects, we have the opposite problem in that we have a lot of projects looking for revenue, so we are trying to come up with other strategies as well as all of those separating the conflicting movement strategies.

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Strandell asked if this was the main rail line or is it a spur type thing. Haugen responded that it is just a spur, it does not travel any further north than Grand Forks. He added that part of the Mills' availability to land a Unit Train entailed them having to extend the Mill Spur north of where it currently stopped, so you will see out there now on Mill Road, if you drive it, new railroad track being laid down, but it isn't connecting anywhere else yet. Strandell said that the reason he asked is he is wondering if it would be possible for that Unit Train to come in and then back out rather than blocking the Gateway route. Haugen responded that a connection to the Glasston Sub line would have to be built. He said that as part of our Glasston Subdivision Study that we did a couple of years ago, and when the North Dakota Mill first identified their expansion, we worked with them and the property owner and BNSF to see if that northern connection could be built instead of using the Mill Spur, and that did not turn out to be feasible yet; and the Mill had to move forward with their expansion and this was their solution to land the Unit Trains, to extend the current Mill Spur northward several thousand feet, but there is still an opportunity to add that connection to the Glasston Sub and that way allow some of those Unit Trains to not even come into Grand Forks proper. He added that most of the grain in North Dakota that the Mill is getting is north and west of Grand Forks, so that Glasston Subdivision serves most of Northeastern North Dakota and its different spur lines throughout.

Information only.

MATTER OF DRAFT 2019 BIKE MAP

Viafara reported that last month this body adopted the 2045 Bicycle/Pedestrian Element of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, so in the Bike/Ped element we have Goal #3 that deals with access and mobility and the gist of that particular objective is to improve the bicycle and pedestrian maps to facilitate user's access, connections, mobility and regular enjoyment of the system.

Viafara stated that the map that is printed every year is printed with that objective in mind. He said that another issue that this map is trying to address is that we would like to integrate more transit, safe routes to school, historical neighborhoods, and more safety issues into the overall design of the bicycling activities.

Viafara said that what staff is asking today is that we are bringing this report just for your information, but he would tell you that map, when you see it, it is supported by a number of goals and objectives that are already adopted and included in our different plans. He added that they are also asking if you could go to Survey Monkey, and the link is provided in the packet, on or before February 26th and provide any input you may have on either the panels of information, or the bike map itself.

Viafara pointed out that a copy of the proposed 2019 map was included in the packet. He referred to it and stated that they have received some comments already from the Grand Forks Engineering Department staff, letting us know of some segments that need to be included, and those are already included in this draft map. He said that they are also working on the cover, specifically on the different panels of information and are incorporating comments/suggestions that they already received from Safe Kids and other stakeholders concerning fine-tuning the language.

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Haugen commented that, as noted in the staff report, we are earmarking the release of the new map during the Home and Garden show at the Alerus Center at the end of March. Viafara added that by March 23rd, for the Home and Garden show, they expect to have the maps printed and ready to be released to the community.

Information only.

MATTER OF 2019 FLOOD BRIDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Haugen reported that over a decade ago we produced a management plan for flooding events and other bridge closures of the three main bridges. He said that as part of that exercise we agreed that annually, prior to the spring flood or flood potential, we would update and distribute information on the main contacts, titles, and phone numbers, and that is the real purpose of this agenda item, for the Technical Advisory Committee and the Executive Policy Board to review the list to make sure that we have the correct titles identified and also the correct phone numbers so in the event there is a need to have a strong coordinated flood effort we have up-to-date information.

Haugen commented that the outlook is positive that we aren't going to have the likelihood of a major or even a minor flood event, or a moderate flood event that would require a significant flood fight.

Strandell pointed out that almost all of the phone numbers on the list are land lines rather than cell phone numbers, and he would think that most everyone has a cell phone, so should those number be changed. Haugen responded that what he can do is to redistribute the list to the main staff people on the list and ask them if they want their cell numbers included or if they want to keep their land lines.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. 2018 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that this is the monthly report listing activities that took place in the month of January. He stated that the big items, of course, were the finalization of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, that has been formally submitted to our State and Federal Partners, so they have not submitted a reply at this time, but they do have until the end of February to give us some sense of their acceptance of the document.

Haugen pointed out that we did initiate the transit merger between UND and the City of Grand Forks; and on the MPO website, just to highlight a couple of other activities there is information available on the Mn220 North Corridor Study. He added that they just met yesterday so there will be more information added to this item, and they encourage everyone to go on and take a look at it to find out what is going on on Mn220 North. He stated that they also met yesterday, and you probably saw in the Herald something about the Grand Forks Downtown Action Plan process, a subprocess of that has been

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our parking assessment for Downtown Grand Forks. He said that they met with that group yesterday, and their web-page they will be updating information that we have compiled on the parking in Grand Forks.

Information only.

b. Possible CAT Route Change

Haugen reported that you may have already heard of proposed CAT route changes. He referred to the agenda and pointed out that they did provide a link on this. He added that soon they will be working on public engagement process to get people's feedback on some possible route changes. He said that that is still in the works; sometime in March you should be notified and invited to some public engagement meetings on changes to the CAT system, and will ultimately be brought back to the City Council for their consideration most likely in April.

Information only.

b. Bill Listing For The 11/17/18 to 12/14/18 Period

Haugen reported that the list of bills for the November 17th, 2018 to December 14th, 2018 period was included in the packet for your review.

Powers commented that it shows that we are spending \$4,500 a year on Brady Martz, does that sound right. McNelis responded that that is for audit costs. Powers asked if that was kind of spendy. Vetter asked if the MPO had gone out for quotes on the audit at all. Haugen responded that we haven't in the recent past.

Powers said that another item is \$870 to East Grand Forks Water and Light, what is that for. Haugen responded that it is for access to computer storage, computer use, computer assistance, postage, phone lines, etc. Strandell asked if that was a monthly bill. McNelis responded that that is a quarterly cost.

c. ND Legislature Prairie Dog Legislation

Haugen reported that the North Dakota Legislature is still moving forward with the Prairie Dog Legislation that would potentially add some revenue for investments and infrastructure.

d. MN Legislature

Haugen reported that the main news out of Minnesota is the Governor's tax proposal, or budget proposal, that includes a .20 cent gas tax hike that would raise \$2 billion dollars in the two bienniums for transportation. He stated that this would trickle down 35% annual increase to the City's budget for the City Municipal State Aid Account.

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Haugen commented that, just as a reminder, as these new revenue streams become possible, we will have to revisit our financial plan of our Street and Highway document, and other documents, to adjust for the new revenue.

Information only.

DISCUSSION

Michael Huot, property owner, reported that they held a meeting over on the Belmont side on the bridge issue that is going on. He said that it was an interesting meeting; adding that it was different than the last meeting because the last one was like shock and awe, where did this come from, how did you come to this conclusion, and so on and so forth; so it was actually an information meeting.

Huot stated that they went over all of the data, the data that you looked at, the data you made decisions on, how you came to the conclusions you did. He said that all of the data wasn't exactly agreed upon, as far as, he isn't saying it wasn't valid data, but it was kind of hard to get their heads around because of the population difference on the two sides of the river, and how they formulated traffic flow and peoples driving habits.

Hout said that they talked about not repeating history, and that means not waiting until the final hour and then saying that this is going to happen and they knew nothing about it; so they went over the East Grand Forks Website, the Grand Forks Website and were shown how to get on them and how to get the data on their phone, etc., and the conclusion was that if you want to be informed you can be informed.

Huot commented that they then discussed where they go from here, how do they keep themselves updated. He said that they talked about the fact that the first time additional bridges were discussed was in 1968 or 1969, which seems like a long time ago, but now we are almost to 2020 so that went pretty quick; so in his mind the next twenty years are going to go pretty fast too, so they asked the question – how do we stay informed.

Huot stated that the two things that came up were the two locations for bridges; 32nd Avenue and Merrifield, and they asked how they keep informed on both those locations. He said that a couple of questions were: 1) Merrifield Road was approved by Polk County and Grand Forks County. He asked if there had ever been any kind of feasibility study done on that location, and if not why. Haugen responded that they did show you that they did a report roughly ten years ago on the feasibility of that bridge. He said that it did prove to be feasible, but because it wasn't a full NEPA document, a recommended alignment was identified for it. Huot asked if it was still valid. Haugen responded that it is essentially valid, however it would have to have some updates to it include cost expenditure inflation added to some of the cost estimates, those are included in the report that they give in the Street and Highway Plan, so that information is essentially there, but it would need some updating done.

Huot asked if there was any effort done towards securing the funding to actually start completion to get it to shovel ready, was there any discussion made on that after the feasibility study was done. Haugen

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responded that the county boards met a few times in joint session; initially the joint sessions were on the Thompson Bridge replacement, and at that time they decided to focus on replacing the Thompson Bridge first, and then after that they would then consider looking at Merrifield, but since then both Counties have had individual discussions; Polk County is also faced with the Nielsville Bridge closure issue, Grand Forks is not part of that bridge, but as we discussed at the meeting Monday, Grand Forks County has talked, at least their Engineer has, about suggesting that since the County has up to 10 mill

road alliance and they are only down somewhere in the neighborhood of 7 mills that they could assess a full 10 mills and finance their half of the bridge, so there has been some of that discussion taking place. Rost commented that the Grand Forks County Commission Board has two issues come up; 32nd Avenue and Merrifield. They felt that Merrifield was the place to put it. He added that the reason they didn't support 32nd is because it is a City issue, so they just supported the Merrifield Bridge; and it was also agreed that there is still time to work around the Merrifield area as it isn't developed yet.

Huot commented that, with that said, what the conclusion was is that we get one opportunity to save \$30 million dollars; and that would be that first the Merrifield Bridge goes in, and lets just say that the driving habits according to the data aren't exactly what the simulation stated; or, if it is, you are sure going to get a lot more buy-in on a 32nd Bridge, or Elks or wherever you are going to put it, with actual hard data instead of simulated data. He added that what they learned, and how they got the data and how it is disseminated down; fine, he can't dispute it, he can't say it is right or wrong; but real data will tell you exactly if it is right or wrong. He said that this is the only chance we get to save the \$30 million dollars. He added that if you build a Merrifield Bridge and the level of service stay the same or get worse, it makes absolutely makes sense, so his question today is how do we get informed on both sites, as far as where we are at with funding instead of going 4 ½ years and not it is the 5th year and now we have to update, that is where the agitation comes in because there is no room for any adjustment or questions and so on and so forth, so if something is going on and they don't like it or they want more answers then we go to different council members and tell them that we are confused on this decision, we don't understand this, so is there any way in these meetings that we can go to the website and say here is the update on the Merrifield and here is the update on the 32nd funding process, because no news creates agitation, so as long as there is something on there so they can feel informed that would be best because they fell short before. He said that that was kind of the sense he got at the meeting; he felt a lot of the hostility went away, and he thinks that the acceptance, they aren't there yet, but he thinks there is actually a viable plan stating that both bridges need to be built in the future, one has nothing to do with the other, and one can actually stop the need to build the other, that makes sense, that order makes sense, unless disputed through some other criteria, but they are looking for update, and he doesn't know what the answer is, they just don't want to hear that all of a sudden we've got the funding and in 24 months we are going to start digging, not enough time.

Powers asked if at the intergovernmental meeting coming up there is a chance that the bridge issue will be brought up. Vetter responded that he would doubt that it would, but it could. He added that this meeting usually covers the state of, here's where we are at right now.

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Vetter stated that he visited with Mayor Gander about wanting to keep this process going, and he has voiced that he wants it to continue also; although he hasn't touched base with him for a couple of weeks to see if he has any meetings set up or anything, but as that progresses he is thinking that the MPO will be very involved with it so any updates will probably come through the MPO. Huot stated that that is what people are looking for, they want to know where they need to go to get updated, how can they give input, etc. Powers suggested that maybe we need another meeting with everybody. Vetter said that he would reach out to the Mayor again to see if has set up anything, and if not maybe we should look at doing that. He added that he knows that they are going down to the Cities next week to visit with Legislators, and the bridge issue is one of the topics that they are going to discuss with them, so maybe after that meeting there might be something scheduled. Huot said that that would be perfect, then they can go to the website and get updates on either or, it is something, it is more than what they have now, and then we can eventually have discussion rather than pointing fingers.

Huot said that that is what came out of the meeting. He added that Mr. Haugen was there and he thinks it was a great discussion. He stated that on their part too, the first meeting had a lot more people, the second didn't have as many, which is disheartening to him; you can only do what you can do, but he thinks that if we can get information on the website, to those two sites, he feels a lot of people would be much happier.

Haugen referred to a slide from the meeting we are talking about right now, and explained that he did inform everyone that, as Mr. Vetter just stated, East Grand Forks is considering a request to their legislature to fund, and it is his understanding it is to fund the NEPA process project development to get it shovel ready, and not to actually fund this cycle of legislation to actually construct. He said that he also told the groups that the cost estimate is roughly \$2 million dollars to get a project that is close to shovel ready, and then as he explained to the group, they truly can't get a project to 100% shovel ready because until we have the funds to construct the project, our federal partners cannot make a decision on the NEPA document, and until the federal partners can make a decision you are not truly shovel ready. He added that we also know that on the Grand Forks side the Council President has floated the idea of having a study of where the shortest crossing could be, somewhere between 32nd and 17th, but instead of having that bridge penetrate the dike and attach to an arterial roadway, it would act more like the Greenway Trail System does, and disperse and allow people to take multiple access points into the built area, and he doesn't know if Grand Forks has acted on that, he doesn't know if there has been any movement other than the Council President's idea floating around.

Powers said then that you would go over the dike and then go wherever you want. Haugen responded that it would be very much like the Greenway Trail System is; you have two bridges that connect the trail system, you go to the south bridge and there is no direct access point to the "dryside" – there are multiple access points.

Powers asked if this would all be on the wet side. Haugen responded it would replace the trail, or go next to the trail, to move traffic north and south and allow access at different points, that is the concept that the Council President has expressed as Mr. Haugen understands it.

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Powers said that from the Minnesota standpoint, Mr. Vetter just said that he will have a meeting with the Mayor and the Mayor is going to be going down to the Cities and maybe some of this stuff gets on the papers today, but we've got to firm it up a little more. He told Mr. Huot that he has to remember that the "P" in MPO is for Planning, it isn't for funding. Huot commented that you have to have a plan first. He added that he is really interested in the Grand Forks County what initiative was taken for the Merrifield Bridge to make sure it doesn't get stalled; if it is a no it is a no, we just have to know what the reality is, we can't stay in this gray area.

Vetter commented that as far as the East Grand Forks side, they visited with some of the council members; they feel that if the federal and the state would come up with the funding they would have their local share tomorrow, where they could match it, and get this deal done, it is just a matter of getting the state and feds on board. Huot asked if that was true for the Grand Forks side too. Mock responded that she doesn't know Grand Forks' position. Strandell said that as far as Polk County goes, its been ten years ago now that they protected the right of way at Merrifield so that people can't build on it, and they are on record as supporting the bridge; and although they haven't said no to anything else, that would be number one on their list because it is a county issue not just a city issue. He added that they also have the Neilsville Bridge, wherever it is hanging. He said that their County Engineer is head of the National Association of County Engineers, so he thinks maybe he might have some influence, but it hasn't happened yet, but they do have interest in replacing the Neilsville Bridge, but there are people that feel that a bridge in another place might be a better use of money.

Huot stated that he thinks the public just has to know where to get behind. He said that when you mention that you could have local funds available if the feds and state say you can have the funds; that expedites the whole thing, that is instantaneous; when you talk about two years to even start doing some ground work that isn't a lot of time for people to react, so on the Polk and Grand Forks side, it will all depend on how many people you can get behind it, if people get behind the 32nd Bridge it is going to happen, if they get behind the Merrifield it is going to happen, we just need to know which direction to go, we need some data to make that decision.

Strandell said that his personal opinion is that we need two bridges; Merrifield and an inner-city. Huot said that the consensus is, maybe it is self-enduring, but you build Merrifield first and if the level of service goes to an acceptable level you just saved yourself \$30 million bucks; if it doesn't everything you said came to fruition, there is no down side to it, especially finding out that both bridges are a necessity because the 32nd Bridge, as far as he understands, doesn't help us on the Grand Forks side; we've got to have the 47th Interchange plus the Merrifield Bridge, that is just going to happen anyway, so why not take advantage of a possibility of doing it the other way; and he is preaching from both sides, if we build a Merrifield Bridge and 32nd was the bridge to go he has zero problem, that is just the way the world works, but right now he thinks there is just too much gray area which is causing the agitation.

Information only.

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ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY ROST, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 20TH, 2019,
MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:05 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy McNelis,
Office Manager