

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

Clarence Vetter, Chairman, called the March 20th, 2019, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:03 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Clarence Vetter, Mike Powers, Warren Strandell, Al Grasser, Jeannie Mock, and Ken Vein (via conference call).

Absent were: Bob Rost and Marc DeMers.

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

Vetter declared a quorum was present.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 20TH, 2019, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 20TH, 2019 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MATTER OF 2019 BIKE MAP

Viafara reported that he distributed copies of the 2019 Bike Map for your information. He explained that the purpose of this update is to inform you that the map that you are seeing is part of the goals and objectives as stated in the recently adopted Bike/Ped Plan.

Viafara commented that part of those goals; in particular Economic Vitality and Access Mobility, are the ones that are leading this bike map. He stated that they want to provide more continuity to provide more directness and to make it more convenient for the users when they are enjoying the system.

Viafara referred to the map and went over the new segments that are included in this map. He stated that also of interest is the fact that the map, on the back, has a number of panels. He explained that those panels are made to convey information on safety; in particular safety in proximity to schools, safety for

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new users and grownups, and also to provide information on historical districts and recreational facilities.

Viafara reported that an electronic version of this map will also be available soon on both Cities websites and the MPO website. He added that it will also be distributed at the Home Show this weekend as well.

Information only.

MATTER OF PROPOSED CAT ROUTE CHANGES

Kouba reported that in July 2018 Cities Area Transit rolled out a whole new system of routes. She said that since that time they have received comments/suggestions from the public and drivers; and they did a survey to see what issues they may have with the changes, what might be missing between current and old routes, and CAT put out a report of what they were hearing from people, as well as after they reviewed how things were working on their side of this, and they made a few recommendations based on that information.

Kouba stated that they looked at how they could implement those recommendations to be able to increase service on Route 3; improve on-time performance (there was an on-time performance previously, and now it just shifted to a couple different routes) so transfers can meet up better; provide direct service between the downtown, Walmart, Target, and other south-end destinations; improve service between UND and south end destinations; and reduce average speeds to complete routes.

Kouba commented that after they did this analysis they found that all the changes they were making was a neutral process, so there isn't any increase in cost of services.

Kouba reported that they put out all of this information on March 4th, and they had a public meeting last night, and will have another one tomorrow night here in East Grand Forks, and the comment period ends on March 29th. She said that they are looking at bringing this to the Committee of the Whole on April 8th and City Council on April 15th. She added that they are looking to implement these routes by June 3rd.

Kouba commented that to date they have received very few comments, in fact she has only received seven comments herself, and most of them are concerns with scheduling and meeting up to make sure they get to work on time.

Kouba referred to the Proposed Route Changes report (included in the file and available upon request) and went over the proposed route changes briefly.

Powers asked how many buses run each day. Kouba responded that currently the main routes run six buses off-peak hours and ten buses on-peak hours; and this would have eight buses running all the time.

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Grasser asked if this has been implemented or are you needing to implement it. Kouba responded that they are going through the public participation process right now, and are looking at getting it implemented by June 3rd. Grasser stated that he thinks that after these have been running for a month or two if staff could give us an update on what the public's reaction is to the changes. He added that it is always scarier when you are proposing something; a lot of times it is better after you actually give it a go. Kouba commented that they had a lot more comments, and they left the comment period open last year for the simple reason that it was such a huge change, this time they are just tweaking things to make it run better overall, so hopefully we won't have too many bad comments.

Information only.

MATTER OF MN 220 NORTH STUDY UPDATE

Viafara reported that the project is on schedule, and the consultant has been fulfilling their responsibilities they accrued once signing the contract.

Viafara stated that we recently received Tech Memo #4; which is the result of the analysis of a number of alternatives, and the development process that the consultant used in order to provide us with some concepts and ideas to address and improve access control, safety, mobility, capacity and pedestrian crossings on MN 220 North Corridor. He said that as a result a number of proposed alternatives were submitted for consideration and are listed in the staff report. He went over them briefly. He added that in the report there is a listing of all the improvements proposed for each one of the intersections on the corridor.

Viafara commented that what he would like to bring to everyone's attention is the fact that one particular recommendation is the round-a-bout for the intersection of 17 at 220 has peaked the interest of some of the stakeholders, so the MPO, in cooperation with MnDOT and with the City of East Grand Forks, hosted two events yesterday whereby we discussed that series of improvements with the stakeholders from the corridor, so it is moving along, in terms of whether the intersection may be able to satisfy some kind of truck movements and agricultural equipment, and overall the mobility at that particular intersection for the benefits of the business on the service road.

Viafara reported that if anyone is interested, the entire presentation from the consultant is available; and also the complete Tech Memo #4 is available on the links provided in the staff report.

Viafara stated that the MPO, in cooperation with the City of East Grand Forks, will be giving a presentation at the City's Work Session to further explain the making of each one of these and provide them with further information.

Vetter asked if he was correct that this study was requested by MnDOT. Haugen responded that that is correct.

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Haugen commented that, just to highlight how this study is taking shape; it is really changing Mn 220 North, essentially from 15th St NW. past 23rd Street. He stated that right now that first southern portion of that is a five lane section; and what they are finding from past analysis is that there is too much roadway there, for the vehicles that are forecasted even in the future; so what is shaping up is a series of roundabout at 17th, 20th, and 23rd; instead of keeping the five lane section at 17th Street it transitions to a three lane section and at 23rd it transitions to the rural area, so now MnDOT has about a 2030 timeframe to work on the concrete pavement here, and if this study is finalized with those recommendations that is likely when we will have the transition from the current pavement to this “road diet” and roundabout installed.

Haugen stated that this is kind of a different feel to the corridor than what has been shown in the past, as what are the City’s and MPO’s desires were for that corridor. He added that in the past they were planning to have it continue as a five lane section, up to 23rd Street, but now this is showing that the real capacity, there is too much roadway, so streamlining it down to what is really needed for that roadway.

Grasser said that the traffic planning goes out 20-years, and if you aren’t going to do the work until 2030; the question he has in his mind is if we are using capacity in the planning period, how close are we to the capacity of that three lane road, is there still a lot of capacity left at that point or are we bumping up against capacity Haugen responded that there is still a lot of capacity. He added that introducing the roundabouts helps that capacity because there is more efficient, they can handle more.

Haugen stated that that is when the major concrete work is planned. He said that some of these improvements that are pedestrian oriented, or others, could happen prior to that. He added that some other areas of the corridor start south of US 2, so there are other improvements that could be done, but that is the major shift what is going on on this corridor from past studies; there is that segment between 17th and 23rd.

Viafara said that there have been some traffic control analysis, there would be some improvements there; there is a proposal to have three quarters access management at intersections, and traffic signals, so those could be implemented first before getting into the major concrete expenditures.

Vetter asked if this study was also addressing the Highway 2/220 Intersection. Viafara responded that it is. Haugen commented that that one looked at even grade separations and other more unusual intersection designs, but it is really boiling back to having duel left turn lanes for east-bound to north-bound as the most cost efficient and effective alternative for that intersection. He added that there will be some tightening up on some of the right turns.

Information only.

MATTER OF GRAND FORKS DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY UPDATE

Haugen reported that previously we provided you with the analysis of the existing parking conditions downtown, and just to highlight the key findings from that is that we find there is sufficient parking

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spaces available; the utilization or the occupancy of those spaces was in the low 50% range both during the week and weekend. He said that they also found that the enforcement, particularly of the two-hour parking, was not followed; there were a lot of violations observed that weren't ticketed, and then we looked at the ticket analysis and found there weren't many tickets issued. He explained that that is partly because right now the current staffing at the police department is using community service officers and parking enforcement downtown is sort of their fourth or fifth priority, and their other duties take up time that they can't devote to enforcement.

Haugen commented that the next reports are saying that, first there is a lot of redevelopment being proposed in downtown Grand Forks; what does that mean to our parking situation; and the second report discusses how we can better manage and market the parking that is available in the downtown.

Haugen said that the first information will be about how that future development and redevelopment will fit with the parking supply, and one of the key concepts that they are trying to get communicated is, instead of looking at a static parking requirement based off twenty four hours a day is the graphic that shows that parking time of day profiles are different based on the different uses. He added that their analysis of the impact of future redevelopment is working off of the implementation of this concept of time of day. He stated that in the later information they show better how this comes into play, and he will focus on that before he goes back to the redevelopment.

Haugen reported that the current way the parking is managed in the downtown is that you have one stall for either a full twenty-four hours; or, for instance the Central ramp has most of it as school stalls reserved from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and then most of the remaining stalls reserved until 6:00 p.m., but in actuality those users aren't there 24-hours, or even there during the reserved times, so as a result of the current practice there is almost half of the parking ramp not being utilized, there are empty stalls, but the signage states that you, as a downtown user who wanted to come to City Hall, or a business, would be violating the permit system on that ramp if you park there between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., even though half the stalls are available; so we need to try to change the management of how parking is determined, not necessarily adding stalls. He referred to a graph that gives an idea of how much different total parking spaces would be under each system. He went over it briefly.

Haugen said that this leads us back to the redevelopment scenarios; and we know there are current projects under construction, and there are some projects that have been preliminarily reviewed as concepts. He went over these briefly, stating that they are using existing plus projects that have been proposed and communicated to the public; and then to get a sense of how much parking there is available, if you go by the occupancy rate, they considered what would happen if the current Century Link building area was completely redeveloped as a very high and dense development with retail on the main floors and several residential stories above to try to give us a sense as to how much parking is available from an occupancy point of view.

Haugen reported that our contract with the consultant was to also try to get some sense of what is trending across the nation and how that might impact our parking supply. He stated that some of the things that are trending are downtowns, or higher density, tends to shift the mode over to the folks that

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don't rely on parking for vehicle use; so they have one scenario that does that; they are also acknowledging that automated vehicles are going to have an impact and this graphic gives some sense of when that implementation will be taking place. He added that they are on a ten-year timeframe so they are having roughly maybe an optimistic side 20% impact figured in and then they also looked at the use of ride sharing or lift/uber impacts as well.

Haugen stated that under all of these scenarios, they are showing that without the impact of the bike/peds or the impact of automated vehicles, that we still have a rather large supply of parking spaces available, even with the impact of all of that development, plus that really hypothetical high intensity of the Century Link development.

Haugen commented that once they started incorporating walking and biking only, they only saw a slight reduction in the total parking required, not a very significant one; and that is just assuming kind of the existing bike/pedestrian infrastructure in place, not an intensification of the infrastructure. He added that, again, we still see a lot of occupancy available, a lot of stalls available. He said that autonomous vehicles, again have some impact, but not a great impact to the availability of parking.

Haugen summarized that we've gone over existing conditions and the assumption that if we can change the managing of parking stalls to the time of day profile, there are plenty of parking spaces available in downtown Grand Forks for now, and with all of these developments occurring the next ten-years.

Haugen said that the next step is how can we implement and get to this change of how parking is thought of in downtown Grand Forks; and the first way is trying to focus on how we can better market the way parking is handled. He stated that one of the marketing strategies involves, not just rebranding, but really how we permit and sign the Central and Corporate Parking Ramps. He added that they are working with the County, who basically operates the County Parking Ramp and are on the committee, and really focus on the ones the City controls and give advice and recommendations to not just determine how to sign them, but also just to make it easier for the whole permitting process to take place. He said that people will still be able to reserve spots, there is a way to simplify that on-line, but right now people have to physically walk into City Hall to do this.

Haugen commented that one thing they have discussed, but not to any great length yet, is whether or not there should be a parking maximum so that as new developments come in there is a desire to have parking onsite for their development for their residents and/or visitors; currently right now the City doesn't really dissuade them from having more parking stalls than what the parking assessment would require, so they are identifying that we have a lot of parking stalls downtown, so there is really little need to add more stalls than what is being suggested as being required under City code. He stated that the two most recent developments downtown both added, and the report says he thinks 40% more parking than was required; so they are introducing having some discussions on whether there should be parking maximum, and that gets into the concept that there is better use of downtown space than having land sit as surface parking lots, higher and better uses, and that is coming through the Downtown Action Plan process as well.

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Haugen said that they are trying to encourage the police department to have a way to have one dedicated person really enforcing the hot spot areas of the downtown, specifically the North 3rd Street neighborhood, and also have more regular parking enforcement taking place so that the turnover is occurring more frequently which will free up more parking stalls and might force some better utilization of the more expensive ramp stalls as well.

Haugen reported that they do have an open house scheduled for tomorrow night at the Empire Arts Center. He said that they joined forces with the Downtown Development Association, who is providing a free taco bar to try to gather people in for a meal as well; so that is going on from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. He added that there are two presentation scheduled, one at 4:30 and one at 6:00 p.m.

Haugen stated that this study is scheduled to be completed by the end of May, and they are trying to schedule it with the wrap-up of the Downtown Action Plan, that a different consultant group is doing. He said that they are tentatively scheduled to have their big open house presentation on May 1st, so our deadline of the end of May is kind of contingent on whether or not they may have to shift their deadline to June.

Mock said, then that part of it will be kind of publicizing where the parking is, because part of the study is showing that we all have a perception problem that there is no parking but there is; so is the Downtown Development Association handling some of that public outreach, is that part of the partnership effort. Haugen responded that that is part of the partnership effort. Mock stated that with DeMers coming as a project that will reduce some of the parking, will they try to time that with that? Haugen responded that they are already geared up for that specific project, and this will continue on that marketing campaign afterwards, and the other areas of the downtown, not just the impact DeMers will have on the parking.

Information only.

MATTER OF PROGRESS ON 2020-2023 T.I.P.

Haugen commented that normally in March we would be at the stage where we would have a good idea of what our Draft T.I.P. document would be. He said that on the Minnesota side we are 99% there, but there are still some discrepancies between some cost estimates between our T.I.P. and their draft A.T.I.P., but he fully expects that we will have a draft Minnesota Side T.I.P. in April.

Haugen said that on the North Dakota side things are a little slower; there has only been one award announced, that is sort of the Urban Program, and that is the technical name of that Main Street program that North Dakota implemented a year ago, Grand Forks did receive an award for their North 3rd Street project, which is a reconstruction and street scaping project between University and DeMers Avenues, but the rest of the program has not been announced. He stated that it is being worked on but he does not anticipate that we will have the ability to have a North Dakota side draft T.I.P. available in April, but hope to have one in May.

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Haugen commented that, just as a side note; some rather significant changes that occurred on the Minnesota side are noted in the staff report. He said that on the North Dakota side those same types of impact on revenue haven't been noted within the NDDOT.

Haugen stated that this is just a progress report. He added that in the past, on a more regular cycle, we would have shared preliminary draft documents of what all the awards are that are going on, we just aren't able to do that this year primarily because of the North Dakota partnership.

Grasser asked, just out of curiosity, but you said there was a discrepancy on the Minnesota side between a couple of cost estimates, why is that, how many people are doing estimates and don't they have one organization creating an estimate that everyone uses. Haugen responded that part of it is inflation factor of 17%, so you have one set of engineers that give a cost estimate to put into the document, and normally it is another set of design engineers that get into the project, and they are further along in their design so they have a different cost estimate that they put into their document, then they share that with us and we haven't gotten that information so we are using an older cost estimate, that is essentially what is taking place. He added that they ran into over-programming and higher cost, year of expenditure, their money got real tight so they were trying to go with the best cost estimates they had available to put into place, and we aren't getting that information as fast, and that is what is causing the discrepancies.

Haugen reported that the goal is to have this completed in August as one T.I.P. document, because if you recall how we have to inform how our performance measures are being met and we would rather do that as one document than to have to do it twice as two separate State documents.

Information only.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

There was no one present for discussion.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. 2019 Annual Work Program Project Update

Haugen reported that this is our monthly project progress report so that you know where we are at with the key projects that are in our work program.

Information only.

b. Acceptance Of 2045 MTP

Haugen stated that this is a letter that we received from our main Lead State Agency that our 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was reviewed and is being accepted. He added that our clock has now started so January of 2024 we will need to produce the 2050 plan, and as we said during the adoption

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process we hope more revenue becomes available so we are updating this plan rather than waiting for that five year period before we touch it again.

Information only.

c. Draft North Dakota Moves Plan Out For Review

Haugen reported that North Dakota does have a draft document, they call North Dakota Moves, that is directed towards the Bike/Ped movements and public transportation for the State of North Dakota, and it is out for review and comment. He said that he has a link to the document if anyone is interested.

Information only.

b. Bill Listing For The 2/16/19 to 3/15/19 Period

Haugen reported that the list of bills for the February 16th, 2019 to March 15th, 2019 period was included in the packet for your review.

Information only.

DISCUSSION

Grasser commented that at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting last Wednesday, in regard to the project update, the committee did ask that another column be added for the project scheduling so that we are aware of what the original completion date is/was, and if necessary an updated/amended completion date as well. Viafara added that that request has been addressed and will be on the report next month.

Strandell asked if the downtown parking study document was going to be handed out at the open house tomorrow night. Haugen responded that there will be a complete draft of the three documents available for people to review, but they aren't anticipating handing people printed copies of those documents, but they are available on the MPO website and the Grand Forks City's Downtown Action Plan website as well.

Grasser commented that, as long as he can remember, studies get done and they say there is plenty of parking; and in the meantime everyone complains that there isn't enough parking, so somehow, someway, and he isn't sure how to rectify the expectations with the technical analysis. He said that technically there is parking there, but no sooner will we get done with this study, and there will be concerns about not enough parking downtown. He added that he thinks that some of that is that it gets to be the expectations, and they probably aren't right, but he is just point this out, it seems like there is something left uncompleted or undone at that connection with the public about what they want versus the technical analysis.

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Vetter asked, is the expectation that they want on-street parking and not have to go to a parking ramp. Grasser responded that that is probably part of it; nobody likes ramps, the only thing is you take the ramps out of there that is a large part of the inventory. He added that it isn't possible, but again, somehow it would be nice to be able to communicate to people that the numbers are there; what are the expectations, how close can we get to meeting those expectations. He said that he was even debating, and he probably can't do it, but can you use Google to track where people park and how far they walk, so we can actually find out what people are doing downtown, because it just seems like there is always a small piece that is missing.

Haugen commented that, and Ms. Kouba can attest to this; but when Grand Forks held their Downtown Conference, there really wasn't a great marketing piece that was put in people package that they received, and a lot of people came from out of town and the closest ramp that they could see was the Central Ramp and when you drive in you see this confusing sign that basically says there really isn't any parking available until evening, yet they can see all these empty stalls, so that is kind of the issue with marketing or messaging that the Downtown Development Association is taking a look at to get a better message out there.

Powers asked how much of the County Ramp is assigned parking. Haugen responded that about $\frac{3}{4}$ is assigned. He said, however, that there are more 2 hour parking spaces available in the County Ramp than at the Central Ramp. He added that at the Corporate Ramp there are a lot of signs that say there is free parking, but it is for Corporate Center use only, so how that is monitored is confusing as well.

Grasser referred to the entry sign at the Central Parking Ramp and commented that to him he thinks part of the issue is communication. He pointed out that the first sentence on that sign is "Central Ramp", and he doesn't care what the title of the ramp is, the thing he is interested in is "free public parking", so he would tend to rearrange those sentences a little bit.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY GRASSER, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 20TH, 2019,
MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:58 P.M.***

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy McNelis,
Office Manager