

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

**Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 – 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Training Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Clarence Vetter, Chairman, called the May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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, Marc DeMers, Bob Rost, Ken Vein, and Jeannie Mock.

Absent was: Al Grasser

Guest(s) were: David Kuharenko, Grand Forks Engineering and Brian Opsahl, Brady-Martz.

Staff: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; 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 APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2019, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD**

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY VEIN, TO APPROVE THE APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS PRESENTED.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MPO 2018 AUDIT REPORT**

Haugen reported that everyone should have received a copy of the report in your packets, and he will turn this over to Brady Martz to go over their findings.

Brian Opsahl, Brady Martz, said that he has been doing this for three years, and Brady Martz has been doing the MPO audit for a number of years.

Opsahl stated that as many of you know, he goes through things relatively quick so feel free to slow him down and ask questions as you have them.

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Presentation ensued.

Opsahl referred to a letter to the Board of Directors and explained that there was one new GASB accounting standard that was adopted this year, related to other post-employment benefits, and this relates to the involvement in the pension plan. He stated that there is a piece to that that is related to health care, and he will show how that found its way into the financial statements, which was new for 2018.

Opsahl then went over the accounting estimates that are an integral part of the financial statements. He said that the ones that are really subject to change would be those related to the pension liabilities and the other post-employment benefits because they do give an actuarial assumption, so those would be subject to change.

Opsahl pointed out that the financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear and that there were no difficulties with the audit, it went very smoothly, and the report should look very similar to what you've seen in years past, no major changes.

Opsahl referred to the second letter is a Management Letter, and this is what they call "best practices"; and so he knows they've talked about this in years past, they have one observation, and it is more of a technicality. He explained that what they are looking for is formal approval by the Board of Directors, so what they would like to see is that the minutes include the range of checks and the expenditure total of what is being approved. He said that the reason they like to see that is because they can then match up those check numbers and the amounts with what is shown in the general ledger; because it is possible that someone might produce a different check listing than what we see when we do an audit, so they just want to see a formal approval during the board meetings.

Opsahl then referred to the audit report; pages 1-3, and reported that they issued an unmodified, or clean opinion on the financial statements, which is considered a good opinion that the financial statements are reasonably stated.

Opsahl said that they did note one emphasis of a matter related to the new accounting standards for other post-employment benefits, so they do roll that into the prior period adjustment as if it has always been there.

Opsahl referred to pages 4-8; management's discussion on the analysis section, and explained that it is a condensed version of the financial statements which shows comparative information so if you are looking for how 2017 compares to 2018 it has that information in it. He said that it also has some highlights for things that have happened throughout the year.

Opsahl the referred to the financial statements and went over them briefly.

Opsahl stated that pages 11 through 27 are the footnotes to the financial statements, and if there are questions on policies or the pension liability there is a lot of information on that here.

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Opsahl said that pages 28 is the Budget to Actual statement for the general fund. He stated that on a reimbursement basis you will see this a lot; where both revenues and expenditures are kind of off almost the same amount. He went over the statement briefly.

Opsahl referred to pages 34 and 35 and explained that they are the Government Auditing Standard letter, and it is a high level overview of the control structure of the organization. He said that there are two repeat findings, which are very common in businesses this size, and entail segregation of duties within the business office; basically where one or two people handle all the finances, and then auditor preparation of the financial statements and the adjusted journal entries.

***MOVED BY VEIN, SECONDED BY POWERS, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE MPO 2018 AUDIT REPORT, AS PRESENTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None***

***Abstain: None***

***Absent: Grasser***

**MATTER OF APPROVAL OF ND FTA CANDIDATE PROJECTS**

Kouba reported that this is the official solicitation for 2020 Federal Funds for the 5339 and 5310 Grants.

Kouba stated that the Cities Area Transit was the only entity that submitted projects for consideration; the list is as follows:

5339 Funding Requests:

1. Replacement of Roof
2. Upgrade Oil Dispensing & Disposal System
3. Upgrade Lighting, Electrical & Fire Alarm System
4. Parking Lot Improvements
5. Upgrade Shop Ventilation
6. Exterior Maintenance
7. Auto Vehicle Location Equipment
8. Disc Brake Tool
9. Concrete for ADA Boarding
10. Bus Shelter Replacements
11. Shop Pickup Replacement
12. Staff Car Replacement
13. Shop Pickup

5310 Funding Requests:

1. Mobility Manager
2. Replacement of ADA Minivan

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***MOVED BY MOCK, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE NORTH DAKOTA FTA CANDIDATE PROJECTS AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE MPO TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, AND TO GIVE THEM PRIORITY ORDER AS SUBMITTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None***

***Abstain: None***

***Absent: Grasser***

**MATTER OF ALTERNATIVES FROM JOINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Haugen reported that the direction received at the last Executive Policy Board meeting was to review the video from the Joint City Council meeting and identify the alternatives that were discussed at that meeting. He stated that he was able to find three alternatives and did do some analysis on them.

Haugen said that the most frequently mentioned one was the build Merrifield first alternative. He commented that that used to be the priority order, or phasing order that our transportation plans had in the past; we did have a discussion this time around on that and the decision was to not have a prioritized phasing in the current plan. He explained that, as he understood, the reason for not phasing this time was because we were focusing more on local traffic relief and Merrifield doesn't provide that, so the priority or phasing was dropped with the approval of the 2045 plan.

Haugen stated that the second alternative that was discussed was the 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South Corridor location, which is between our 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor and the Merrifield Corridor. He said that what staff did was to make an assumption that if it is midway between the other two corridors it would function sort of how the 47<sup>th</sup> and Merrifield Corridors function. He added that the interesting thing is that because it is a short distance to connect roadways, the approaching roadways would be less as new costs, however the roadways that are there are not designed for the type of bridge traffic that would be attracted, so our best guess would be that because it functions like half of 47<sup>th</sup> and half of Merrifield, it has the benefits that Merrifield brings and attracts some regional traffic, so it has a great reduction in the number of hours traveled and a great reduction in miles traveled, but then there is the negative side on 47<sup>th</sup> of attracting too much local traffic, so it also has more miles traveled and more hours traveled as well; so without doing a real analysis to try to get the other cost/benefit ratios, our best guess is that it might fall in the 1 range, so it is better than 47<sup>th</sup> but is half of what Merrifield, 32<sup>nd</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> would provide.

Haugen commented that a couple other things to note are the fact that East Lake exists so we are talking about another structure. He added that in the past there have been requests from the residents out there to have a bridge built, but that has not come to fruition, money is big cost factor, but jurisdictional control over the roadways are an issue as well. He pointed out that a lot of the area was just recently annexed by the City of Grand Forks, so some of those jurisdictional issues have been eliminated, such as north of 62<sup>nd</sup> has been resolved but the 62<sup>nd</sup> corridor still has jurisdictional issues to resolve. He

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explained that just as it is with 47<sup>th</sup> it is not a City controlled area, it isn't a County area, so the Township is probably not going to appropriate or sponsor a bridge; and we would have to look at Polk County to see if that is another location they would consider, they told us in the past that Merrifield is their top choice. He reported that the difference between this and Merrifield with the second bridge and the coulee, because of how this floods differently and explained what construction would entail.

Haugen stated that another piece of 62<sup>nd</sup> was mentioned in that, because of its proximity to Merrifield and to 47<sup>th</sup> it can serve both purposes with one structure, and so the City of Grand Forks' Land Use Plan shows a lot of residential growth occurring here, so having that truck traffic going through that future residential area seemed to be conflicting with what the City's Land Use Plan's are for that area of town. He added that cost wise it is very comparable to the Elk's Drive Crossing, but then we also have another structure that we don't know the cost of.

Haugen said that the last piece was this sort of multiple North Dakota side access points; it is very similar to the Greenway Trail System we think. He stated that on the south end you have one bridge, roughly around 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, but it does not directly connect to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, instead you would go either north or south, and along the way there would be multiple access points along the river. He commented that just looking at this Elks Drive option; just knowing that because of a few things, the Greenway Plan that was developed after the flood, sort of established the purpose of this area and it is protected by 4-F (Parkland Protection), so with this roadway being part of that plan it would be considered taking of park property, so that is one major obstacle. He added that another obstacle would be that we would roughly be trying to fit a 30-foot cross-section of roadway, so you would have some real pinch points along the floodway that exists now. He referred to a map and went over the various locations briefly.

Vein asked if all of this is various pieces for that plan, if all of this was considered. Haugen responded that that is correct. He explained that as part of the Master Plan for the Greenway that was developed back in 2001, we were able to show future crossings; specifically at 17<sup>th</sup>, Elks, and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, so being part of the official greenway plan, those relax that 4-F protection on those corridors because they are part of the planning redevelopment plan for that area. Vein referred to the map and asked if this is south of 47<sup>th</sup>. Haugen pointed out where the dike and flood protection goes straight south, and stated that he isn't sure where the Greenway ends, although it probably ends at the Southend Drainway, but he isn't sure where the official ending is. Vein said, though, that that is south of 47<sup>th</sup>, so if we look at a 47<sup>th</sup> crossing; and you said 17<sup>th</sup>, Elks and 32<sup>nd</sup> work, but 47<sup>th</sup> does not, correct. Mock asked if it is also classified as "flood-way" so we would have zero flood increase, so any impact would have to be no floodwater rise within the system. Haugen responded that he tried to write in there that when building on a parallel roadway, either along the existing trail or in place of the greenway trail, you have a lot of fill that you will have to introduce for great distances whereas a bridge in those bridge corridors is more isolated in the spot.

Vein commented that after the Joint Council meeting between the Cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks; which he apologizes didn't really end up being a council meeting at all, it was more of a public hearing for people to express themselves, which isn't wrong, but they never really did have a discussion among themselves of what we want to do or not do. He added that Mr. DeMers and himself talked a bit

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after the meeting and he thought that we should take the public comments that they heard and respond to those comments in some way so that we don't just leave it hanging. He said that his interpretation was that some people thought that this was a done deal after they made their comments, but our Long Range Transportation Plan hasn't changed, we still call for 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South to be the bridge location, and he knows that there has been some push from the East Grand Forks Mayor to pursue this should we continue to try to actually put one in at 32<sup>nd</sup>.

Vein stated that this answers a lot of those questions that were put out there, and he would like to thank Mr. Haugen for making that presentation and answering the questions; the facts are the facts and that is what we try to do, but 32<sup>nd</sup> was selected for a lot of reasons including it improves safety, he thinks, city wide as we look at city-wide benefits even though there was a lot of concern about safety on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue itself, and rightfully so, there would be issues on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, but he would perceive that in a plan, as we would implement it, we would have to address those safety concerns because we want to make sure children have safe access to school.

Vein reiterated that he didn't think that maybe everybody left knowing what the next step was going to be after we had that meeting; and would we even contemplate another meeting between us to talk about things, are we going to want to push it forward. He said that he doesn't know what the next step is, initially maybe before we had that meeting he thought we just going to put it into the plan and leave it there like we have done the last three times, but maybe there is a desire; and Ms. Mock and himself have talked about this, but he doesn't believe there is such a thing as "do nothing", because the do nothing means we will continue to enhance or create greater safety issues on Minnesota/4<sup>th</sup> as we continue to grow to the south, so the do nothing is not addressing the safety, so is this the best solution and if it is should we do some level of advancement because this is just in the plan, we haven't done the environmental work, we haven't done any of the potential layouts, we haven't talked about how we might address safety with this; that could be something that we should now pursue as a result of having that meeting, that we might want to take this to the next level if in fact that we are agreeing that this is the right location and that it is going to be a benefit to the Near Southside Neighborhood that is looking for a solution, so should we do some level of continuation or do we just take this information and let it sit.

Haugen commented that some of their thoughts are, whether these alternatives prove to be something with merit to have actual similar level of analysis done. He said that that is why they took this approach of saying "here is what we think, do you have similar thoughts or do you think there is something you want to invest more energy into at these locations". He stated that that would be something that they would bring back to a joint meeting; is these are the alternatives we heard, this is our preliminary review of them, and our thoughts on them, and we should close the chapter on all of them, two of them, or one of them.

DeMers stated that he agrees with Mr. Vein that we should, at a minimum, note all of the objections and include them in an appendix or something like that, with some response to them. He added that he doesn't see anything that changes his mind that we should go back and change what we've done; at

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some point it is an implementation and that is at the City and/or County level, but for us to do it, we don't have any authority to move to that next phase, so he would encourage the counties to start looking at the new Build money that will be available. He said that whether or not the plan actually says Merrifield should go in first or not, the money is out there and it looks like the Merrifield project would be a great option for the County to go after this funding for, but as he said, to him, we've got the plan so the Cities and the Counties need to start on a different level because he doesn't know what we can do as far as transition to implementation from this level. Haugen responded that there are a couple of things we can do; we could do the same work we did on the Merrifield Feasibility Report on the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Corridor, and then we could also explore your programming responsibilities. He stated that in theory you have the ability to prioritize where you are going to invest your federal dollars so as both cities start implementing this plan you can start prioritizing the corridor to be built up so that it can become that bridge location, that is something that you have never done as a body.

Vein asked who did the feasibility study on Merrifield. Haugen responded that the MPO financed it. He added that HDR was the lead consultant and CPS was the hydraulic engineers on that study. DeMers commented that he wouldn't mind going forward with something like that. Vetter asked if this was something that would need to be done anyway if we went ahead with a bridge build. Haugen responded that it would; adding that it is work that informs the NEPA process and provides a lot of the nitty gritty work that is necessary.

Mock asked, when the study is done, who is in charge of that process, does it go through the MPO or does it go through NDDOT or MnDOT depending on who gets funding first. Haugen responded that Federal Highway North Dakota would be the lead agency. Mock said that she knows that sometimes the MPO would fund the NEPA process to get something ready, would we be responsible for that, as the MPO. Haugen responded that it would be just like our planning process, where we ask both councils and maybe the counties, to adopt the same document. Mock said, though, that the feasibility would come first, correct. Haugen responded it could. He explained that what would happen is we would have to put it into our work program, so we would have to carve out funds as we currently have a two year work program in place, so 2020 funding is already identified for projects, so we would have to see if we want to push some of those projects out and put that one in or wait until 2021.

Powers asked, then, the feasibility study does need to be done first. Haugen responded that it can be, but you can go straight to a full NEPA document just as was done on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Grade Separation Project. He explained that those are things that can be done it is just that you aren't getting to that final answer because you don't have funding money, and the ultimate federal record of decision won't happen until you have the money secured, but you can have a lot of the paperwork and bureaucratic work done, it does have a shelf-life, so once it gets a little stale you renew it and try to continue it; adding that another term is "design to build".

Strandell commented that he looked at the possibility of a 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue location quite a bit, and is that completely out of the picture at this point. He said that he knows that the cost/benefit ratio was below 1, but it must have something to do with the travel time, but he knows that on the East Grand Forks side of the

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river 47<sup>th</sup> could be designed so that it could handle truck traffic as well as local traffic. He stated that his biggest concern with the plan is that it wants to connect with Rhinehart Drive and he thinks that that would be a mistake; it should be moved over about a half mile east to Hartsville Road, and that connects right at 13<sup>th</sup>, so that would be the same street that goes to the elementary school, and he thinks it would be great location, but if it is off the table he doesn't understand why because in ten years the cost/benefit issue, with the growth that is going to happen, will see a decrease in the negative cost/benefit situation. Haugen responded that, not to totally disagree, but 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is the flood protection end for East Grand Forks, and 47<sup>th</sup> is a mile south of that, so a lot of the miles traveled and hours traveled will still be that extra one mile south and extra one mile back to get to the 32<sup>nd</sup> and South Columbia Road Corridor. He stated that our 2045 Population, based on the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan, really shows East Grand Forks not growing much past 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South on the Grand Forks side by 2045, so if you add that type of growth into 32<sup>nd</sup>, we are talking 2060, but you still have 47<sup>th</sup> physically a mile south and a mile back up so that adds the miles and hours that put that benefit/cost ratio at a negative, and if you have more housing built in East Grand Forks in particular, assuming that they have their flood protection system, and no growth past that, you will always have that one mile south and one mile north situation going on at 47<sup>th</sup>. DeMers stated, though, that that land use doesn't include a bridge, correct. Haugen responded that it does show a bridge at 32<sup>nd</sup>.

Powers commented that periodically people ask him what are you doing about the bridge. He said that he responds that there is a whole host of people looking at it, but the gist he gets is that they want to see some movement. He added that whatever we decide to do, we should move forward; don't take a study and just put it on a shelf, and that is why he asked if the feasibility is next or should we do some other effort. Haugen responded that Mayor Gander has publicly stated that he wants to go to the full NEPA, shovel ready process, but he isn't sure where the funds will come from for that process. DeMers asked what we would be looking at for cost for a feasibility study. Haugen responded that a ball-park figure would be about \$110,000.00. He stated that we paid \$60,000.00 for the Merrifield one, so with inflation and such it would bring the cost up to around \$110,000.00. He added that the earliest it could be done would be 2020, but we would have to move some things out to make room for it; or we could do it in 2021 when we do our next two year plan.

DeMers asked if, for the next meeting, they could see a draft of what that would be, and then if East Grand Forks is interested in keeping it moving, maybe they could throw X amount into the pot. He added that if we are going to have to move four things off to do this one thing; maybe we have to come up with \$30,000.00 from East Grand Forks to get this done in 2020, then we all get to lose two things, lets see what that is, lets get a draft of what the changes to the 2020 work plan would be, and what we would potentially need to lose to do that. Powers asked if we could also prioritize things at the same time a well. DeMers asked again if this is something that can be done for the next meeting. Haugen responded it could. He added that the two real projects that are in play are updating the land use plans for both cities, that would be the normal cycle of assisting both cities in updating their land use plans, those are the big things we have in 2020 that are in our current work program that would be in play for being replaced by 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge Feasibility Study unless we were able to generate more funds from our MPO partners. DeMers said that that is what he is saying; if at some point if East Grand Forks is serious maybe we need to add some

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dollars to this. Vetter stated his question is if they fund a pot of money is it normally split 80/20 and we split the 20 evenly between the two cities. Haugen responded that that is correct. Vetter said, then, that if East Grand Forks ponied up some money now to draw up the plans to get shovel ready plans, would that be able to go against our 10% contribution in the future. Haugen responded that it probably would not because it isn't MPO work.

Haugen commented that to do a project shovel ready plan, most of the cost is not eligible for MPO Planning Funds. Vetter said, though, that if the City would just pay for it out of their coffers; would that, in the future, go against their 10% contributions. Haugen responded that generally it wouldn't. DeMers said though that usually plans and specs aren't considered fundable by federal dollars. Haugen responded that they are, but there are preferences at the local level as to whether they want to use federal funds or not. He added that both State DOTs use federal funds to do plans and specs project development; the City of East Grand Forks, Minnesota's policy on funding local projects that way are just for the construction itself; Grand Forks has chosen not to fund them because it can limit their total amount of federal funds, it can be capped at an early stage, so they locally fund project development so that they have a more refined cost estimate than they can keep their federal cap.

Vetter asked if Mr. Haugen would be coming back to this body with estimates on a feasibility study at our next meeting. DeMers added that that is basically what he is asking for, but also what our work plan is and what kind of amounts we have allocated to it. He asked what the typical annual work plan funding is. Haugen responded that it is around \$750,000.00.

Haugen reported that he just wanted to inform this body that Mr. Feland, Mr. Murphy and himself are meeting this afternoon, as was discussed at the joint meeting, so he will have some direction from this discussion to share with them, and hopefully they will have some direction from their respective sides of the river.

Haugen commented that the other thing they are doing is to look at similar existing school crossings, in Grand Forks in particular, that are similar to what we are forecasting 32<sup>nd</sup> to have in order to show how day to day school life still happens safely with these types of volumes and roadways near elementary and middle schools, so that will be something else that will be provided to the board at its next meeting.

DeMers said that one thing he was going to take away from the comments is that there is at least a perception that this would change and make things more unsafe around schools, but when you look at it the growth is what is going to drive the increases in traffic along 32<sup>nd</sup>. He added that a lot of traffic that is already going out there is probably already routed out there, so you aren't going to change it but if the perception is that it will maybe we should look at our work plans as school corridor safety plans beyond just Safe Routes to School, or something like that, where we can take a couple specific corridors and explain that this is the current safety levels, and this is what we have done with our walking and bike plans and safe routes to school programs; maybe that would be something that we could use as a mitigation, so instead of spending \$10 million more on some crazy bridge configuration we could spend \$1 million in safety and make these school corridors better.

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Vein commented that there are some safe route kids things that they could already be doing for safety that we should fully support and try to endorse to make sure it happens. He stated that what he found interesting is that if people don't like the results then they maybe challenge the data; like "how do you trust the traffic engineer models"; well that is state of the art, if you don't use that what do you use; and then they will say that maybe if you build a bridge on Merrifield you will see if the data is accurate, but you can't spend that much money to build a bridge just to see if it is accurate or not, we have to use the best available data, and he thinks it is getting better all the time, and the technology we are using now is as good as it has ever been to be able to identify the true value of the benefit/cost ratio as well as any environmental concerns that might be there. He added that again, as he said earlier, there isn't just the safety on Belmont, there is the issue of safety on other intersections throughout the community that would be enhanced by keeping traffic away from these areas, so he thinks we did our due diligence, we studied additional areas just so we would have data that he thought offset should we have a challenge, which we did have, and really could respond to everything that was brought up, so we are probably ahead of trying to get that done. He said that he likes the idea that you guys have come up with as well.

Haugen stated that he just wants to confirm that you won't see any of these three alternatives having much merit to invest more on them. Vein agreed that he doesn't see any reason to study them any further. He added that he appreciates what you pointed out about projects in the greenway, with that suggestion, and he felt that that would be a devastating blow to the greenway to first of all add that, but then the ability to do it as a 4-F plan that really put the end to that, there's no room in this 4-F plan and there is nothing to show that that is going to be better than what we would be proposing with this. He added that he knows that Dana Sande requested you look at that and he thinks you did a nice job doing that.

Haugen commented that the only other thing is the Federal BUILD Program, this year the solicitation is open, but they made one major change in the rules for that. He explained that prior years rural was defined as being outside our urbanized area, and rural was being funded at 100% construction costs, but they have since changed the definition of rural; rural now is anyplace less than 200,000 people in an urbanized setting, so all of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks is now eligible to be defined as rural and will get that full benefit. He added that the program is very top heavy toward rural projects.

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON CAT/UND SHUTTLE MERGER STUDY**

Kouba reported that this study began in March, after we got our consultant, SRF, under contract. She stated that they have been pulling together a lot of information on what UND's costs have been to provide this service over the years. She said that we can see that there is a great volatility in what UND is paying, which is a concern to UND in being able to budget for the service on a yearly basis. She pointed out that they are looking at a \$37.00 rate for their buses, then all of a sudden it raises to \$50+ dollars, so it is very hard to predict, and that is why they have been interested in having Cities Area Transit take it over.

Kouba commented that one thing that we have been looking at to provide that service, or to help with the service, is something called STIC (Small Transit Intensive Cities) funding, which is extra funds provided to transit agencies that provide service to areas under 200,000 in population. She explained that when they looked at all this

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funding at the end of the day we realized that even though we aren't meeting those benchmarks with the addition of this service so we know that Cities Area Transit won't be receiving any extra funding if they do this service, and that was one of the big points that we were very interested in, so right now we are looking at just the campus day and single night routes that run through the campus proper. She said that they are finalizing a lot of the costs for Cities Area Transit and will have that information very soon.

Kouba stated that one of the biggest things that came out of this is that UND made a decision to wait until August of 2020 to implement this should it continue to move forward so they have an extra year to finalize all of the contracts and such, but we are still looking at completing this feasibility study done by September.

Haugen commented that it is looking favorable, so far, so next month you will see a request to amend the T.I.P. to include a Grand Forks Cities Area Transit project to purchase three additional coaches in order to be able to provide this service, so we need to get that into our T.I.P. so that we have them by the time they start in the fall of 2020. He added that, again, we feel that there is enough favorable movement going towards the merger that we are going to ask to amend the T.I.P. to purchase those three buses to serve as the shuttle buses for the UND campus.

Vein stated asked when do we have to make that amendment. He said that he is just wondering if the new UND President comes in or something else would couldn't it be changed that we wait. Haugen responded that as of now we have essentially a month from this meeting to the June meeting to make that amendment, and there is going to be some information shared through the council and UND between now and then so when it comes back here we will have a more formal understanding where both entities are at with the merger; so we can delay action if things are still up in the air. He stated that the actual federal funds are available for obligation until 2021, so from that perspective we have several years to actually get it into the T.I.P. and get the buses ordered, but we think we are having a month here where some information will be shared, council will be requested to act, and other things will be better known, but we anticipate that based on what we know today that things are looking very good. Vein asked what is the wait time for a bus. Haugen responded that it is 10 to 14 months. Kouba agreed it is about a year timeframe. Haugen added that as the cost increases, the federal funds have been capped at X dollars, so as costs go up it isn't an 80/20 cost increase, the 20% becomes 25% or 30%.

**MATTER OF UPDATE ON FUNCTIONAL RECLASSIFICATION**

Haugen reported that this is primarily geared for our North Dakota side. He stated that in 2015 we finalized an update of functional class on the Minnesota side, so we aren't expecting a lot of changes on the Minnesota side.

Haugen commented that for the North Dakota side we have been waiting on some changes based on what might become a part of our transportation plan, so the last map that you adopted as a functional class is shown on this graphic. He referred to the graphic and pointed out the best way to know it is the most current functional classification in that the Central High School Theater expansion area, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street was declassified.

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Haugen stated that what has also happened is that we discussed this with the Minnesota side, Federal Highway has updated their guidelines for functional classification, and the NDDOT then published a policy of how they are going to implement those guidelines, and there are some differences between North Dakota and Minnesota; and lastly NDDOT did provide a map with some of their comments on how the new guidelines will affect our current functional class.

Haugen commented that one of the big things that is also on the Minnesota side is all of these future functional class cannot be shown on our official Functional Class map; only those roadways that we know are programmed in the S.T.I.P. or T.I.P. can be shown on the Functional Class map, so there are several of those that they x'd out.

Haugen pointed out that other things they noted on the map is, we have a lot of what they are terming as "stubs", and you can see that at 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue the road exists but it doesn't connect to any roadway now, same with 62<sup>nd</sup>, so they are called stubs and the new guidelines really don't allow stubs, although there are some exceptions. He stated that on the Minnesota one there are several stubs in place, two of them are connected to the schools. He referred to the map and pointed out where these stubs are located. He commented that there are ways that we can argue and get them justified in being shown, but one of the impacts of our functional class map is that it also identified eligibility for future federal aid, so if we aren't really showing these future roadways as being eligible for federal aid, we get into a catch-22 of trying to get them into the T.I.P. and S.T.I.P. because if they currently aren't eligible we can't give federal funds to them until they are eligible, so that affects some of the stubs. He explained that they initially thought this would be more of a technical process, but there will have to be higher level discussion as to how it really impacts some of these stub roadways and future roadways for federal eligibility.

Haugen stated that to give a quick comparison between Minnesota and North Dakota; Minnesota is also identifying principal arterials and other freeway and expressways in our area, and US#2 might be an example as it is a four-lane divided roadway and Minnesota describes it as a freeway/expressway, but North Dakota is saying that they will just call it a principal arterial. He added that Minnesota also wanted to do minor collectors in the urban area, but North Dakota is saying that they aren't sure we can do minor collectors.

Haugen said that the last piece is, in the past the rule of thumb for functional class is when you crossed the Federal Aid Urban Boundary you automatically adjusted your functional class down, now the new guidelines say that it isn't an arbitrary boundary that causes a change in functional class it is how that roadway really functions for its full length, not just because of arbitrary geography crossing do you automatically change functional class.

Haugen reported that when this was initially discussed at TAC we didn't have a deadline in mind, we just had it in the work program that we would have it complete by the end of the year, but the NDDOT Headquarter Staff indicted that there will be a letter coming soon that may change that timeline. He added that we have already forwarded this map to City Staff asking them to start identifying some of those other areas that haven't been noted that need to have changes to their functional class.

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**MATTER OF UPDATE ON FORMER HERALD BUILDING SPACE**

Haugen reported that he hopes that you are aware that the City of Grand Forks has purchased the Herald Building. He said that with that purchase, again they came to MPO staff and asked if we have any interest in being housed there. He stated that, based on our past discussions, we said that we believe the MPO still has a desire to have a presence in Grand Forks City Hall and East Grand Forks City Hall, it is just a matter of how much space in each one, so we've identified that the minimum space we would require, if the Planning and Zoning staff move there, would be one spot kind of like we currently have, but if we want to switch and have our presence more on the North Dakota side as it was previously for the first several decades for the MPO, we would be seeking of a maximum of five spaces in that area.

Haugen referred to a graphic illustrating the new proposed layout of the Herald Building that has been perceived by City Staff, and pointed out that it provides more staff space around the perimeter where the windows are, however the City is going to be hiring a consultant to assist them in really designing and developing this space further. He commented that Cities Area Transit staff is currently located there, and will continue to be for at least another year while their facility is being renovated, but then that space will also become available.

Haugen stated that the last piece, the Finance Committee talked about whether the costs will be competitive or not; at that time you were hearing some really high square foot costs, but he noted that in the purchase of the building the City is taking on rent from the EDC at a cost of \$12 a square foot until 2023, and they are also doing a five year lease with Forum Communication at a cost of \$14 a square foot, with a CPI escalator that our current leases have with both cities as well.

Haugen reiterated that he is just bringing you up-to-date that the City did purchase the Herald Building instead of leasing space, and they are going to start the process of retaining a consultant hopefully in July and then work with them to design the space and come up with a cost proposal for us. He stated that our current leases are through the end of this year, so sometime before October or November we will be able to make a decision where and what our space needs will be and it will line up with where the City is at with their process of planning out the space.

**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.

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- b. Approval Of Bill/Check List For 4/13/19 to 5/17/19 Period

***MOVED BY POWERS, SECONDED BY DEMERS, TO APPROVE THE ATTACHED  
BILL/CHECK LIST FOR THE 4/13/19 TO 5/17/19 PERIOD, AS SUBMITTED.***

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

***Voting Nay: None***

***Abstain: None***

***Absent: Rost and Grasser***

- c. MnDOT Decarbonization Project

Haugen reported that there is a new MnDOT study on Decarbonization of Transportation. He said that there are some regional meeting scheduled in Bemidji, so if there is any interest from anyone to attend we can try to arrange a car-pooling situation for that date. He added that you also have the website available to you as well.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***MOVED BY STRANDELL, SECONDED BY VEIN, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2019,  
MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 1:10 P.M.***

***MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy McNelis,  
Office Manager