

**Overcoming Barriers**

**Strengthening Connections**



**Ensuring Opportunities**

**Planning One Community**

## **MPO Staff Report**

**MPO Executive Board: August 21, 2019**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review Draft Scope of Work for a 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge Feasibility Study**

Matter of the Draft Scope of Work for 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge Feasibility Study.

### **Background:**

**UPDATE: At the June MPO Board meeting, they directed staff to draft the amendment and the RFP to be available for the August meeting. Attached is a draft of the scope of work that would be incorporated into the RFP. Staff is still working with state and federal partners to reach agreement on MPO funding eligibility and agreeable scope. The draft scope does include the hydraulic analysis, the traffic operations and includes particular focus on school safety.**

At the last MPO Board meeting, staff was asked to develop a possible work program amendment so that a bridge feasibility study could begin on 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S. The intent was to not let this future bridge corridor remain dormant until the next 5 year cycle update to the MTP. Rather, the Board desires to make progress towards this future bridge. After discussion, the work scope centered on a study similar to what was done for the Merrifield future bridge site.

Attached is the scope of work from the RFP issued for the Merrifield Bridge Feasibility Report. The thought would be to copy this scope and insert 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S in place of reference of Merrifield. Also, Cole Creek was an important natural feature for that location; yet there is no similar feature at 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S. – so it will not be included. The contracted consultant cost was \$60,000. Here is a link to the final report: <https://theforksmpo.com/merrifield-road-red-river-bridge-crossing-feasibility-study/>

The estimated budget for the 2020 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Study was calculated to be \$110,000 for consultant costs. MPO staff has been in communication with NDDOT as to the eligibility of MPO funds to conduct this type of study. Further communication is needed to make final determination if any of the scope is not eligible. If any items in the scope are ineligible, then another funding source(s) will need to be found.

Currently, the adopted 2020 Work Program has all known available funds programmed to activities. See attached pages from the document. Beyond the required, annual work activities of the MPO, the 2020 Work Program focuses on assisting each City update its respective Land Use Plans. In addition, a couple of other studies are identified. The studies total \$127,000 and are:

- Bus Route Study – this study was scheduled for 2020 assuming the CAT/UND merger would take place in 2019. With the delay implementation, CAT has concurred that this study can be delayed and incorporated into the 2021 update of the Transit Development Plan.
- School Safety Study – this study is intended to take the 2015 Summary of all school safety studies to the next level by assessing the recommendations versus implementation and to re-visit possible new recommendations for the individual schools.
- Traffic Count Program – this is intended to extend the traffic counting program to the new traffic signals as they are installed or upgraded for video detection.
- Technical Assistance – for various, short term, quick studies that are identified during the year.

Staff believe these can be placed on hold for 2020 and instead use the program funds towards the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge Feasibility Study. The total of \$127,000 would include \$110,000 for the consultant cost. Brief discussion has also been had with the respective City Planners as to the updates to the land use plans could be split funded between 2020 and 2021 Work Programs. The updates typically take over one year to complete; so split funding would be doable.

The MPO Board also is seeking the two Counties hold a joint meeting to further the progress of the Merrifield Bridge project. Initially, a meeting was scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup>; however, it will be rescheduled for another date.

### **Findings and Analysis:**

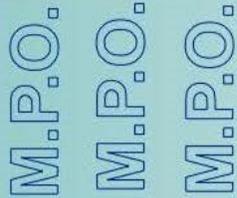
- The MPO Board desires to consider undertaking a 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge Feasibility Study in 2020.
- The adopted 2020 Work Program already has activities programmed so there are no un-allocated funds to placed towards this.
- The 2020 Work Program has some activities that could be delayed in order to re-allocate funds needed to undertake the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge Feasibility Study.
- The MPO Board directed staff to prepare the amendment and RFP for consideration at its August meeting.

### **Support Materials:**

- Copy of Draft Scope of Work of Study

**Overcoming Barriers**

**Strengthening Connections**



**Grand Forks - East Grand Forks  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Ensuring Opportunities**

**Planning One Community**

**Grand Forks – East Grand Forks  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Request for Proposals  
for  
Transportation Planning Services**

**32<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge Feasibility Study**

In Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN

**January 2020**

## **VII. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK**

### **A. Background:**

The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) forecasts capacity problems on the three existing river crossing between the two communities. During the updating of the MTP, the agreed to focus was to identify a location that would address the local traffic needs between the two cities, particularly the relief of the Point Bridge. The 2045 MTP identifies 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S as the chosen site for a future bridge over the Red River to address this local traffic purpose and need. This was determined after a robust analysis of potential river crossings. The analysis confirmed previous Metropolitan Transportation Plans that identified the preference for a bridge at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S location. The intent is for the new bridge to act as similar as possible to how the Point Bridge operates – serving local traffic needs, prohibiting trucks over a certain weight, and with the one main difference of it is expected to provide improved bike/pedestrian accommodations.

The study area is comprised of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S corridor in Grand Forks and the southwesterly corner of the flood protection system in East Grand Fork. The study area project limits are approximately from the intersection of S. Washington St as the west end through the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S corridor to across the Red River and landing on the Minnesota side within the East Grand Forks flood protection system with the eastern end being the intersection of the bridge with Rhinehart Dr (aka 445<sup>th</sup> Ave SW). 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S is functionally classified as a minor arterial within this study corridor. Rhinehart Dr is functionally classified as a minor collector currently and is planned to become a minor arterial with this bridge connection. Intersecting functionally classified streets include S. Washington St, Cherry St., Belmont Rd and Rhinehart Drive. The study area contains intersections varying in size, geometry and spacing. Generally, the study area will focus on the right-of-way 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S. Attached is a map identifying the specific study area to be considered.

The study area includes a number of challenges and considerations when considering a future transportation system. The study area is predominantly residential. Schroeder Middle School and Kelly Elementary School are located in proximity of the corridor. The west end is mainly commercial land use. The future land use plans indicate that this will likely remain the land use into the future. The east end is mainly agricultural and is planned in the land use plans to remain mainly agricultural into the future.

### **B. OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this effort is to identify and address current and projected transportation issues associated with constructing a bridge over the Red River with a dual focus on the school related traffic safety and flood protection system requirements. The intent is to further analyze the feasibility of constructing a bridge at this corridor location. Ultimately, this effort will be to develop a document which will provide recommendations for future transportation needs along 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S and its crossroads. Future planned federal funds investment is in the MTP for this corridor with or without the bridge. This document can assist in how the corridor should be improved with or without the bridge.

### **C. SCOPE OF WORK**

The consultant will be responsible for the necessary activities, including (but not limited to) support by appropriate decision making bodies, data collection, traffic operational analyses, safety analysis, preliminary geometric layouts, warrant analysis, social and environmental impacts, right-of-way needs, access control, coordination with related projects and jurisdictions, responses to review comments, preliminary cost estimates, and federal planning compliance.

The following activities and sub tasks are the minimum scope of work requirements that the consultant must address in the preparation of the application:

### **i. General Considerations**

- 1) Land Use
  - a. Existing and future land use has been identified for significant portions of the study area based on both individual Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Future Land Use Plan. These Plans were adopted in 2013 and are scheduled to be in the updating process in 2020.
  - b. Review the recommended future land uses and validate that the uses are still appropriate for the study area and provide recommendations as appropriate
- 2) Multi-modal connectivity in the study area
  - a. This should include consideration of existing roadways and bicycle/pedestrian, and transit facilities.
  - b. Particular attention will be made to ensure safety in relationship to bike and pedestrian movements in the vicinity of the schools and the Greenway.
- 3) Flood Protection Allowances
  - a. A bridge will have to work with the flood protection system and will need close coordination with respective agencies such as USACOE, FEMA, etc.
- 4) Planning level cost estimates for future feasible transportation alternatives

### **ii. Specific Scope of Services**

The Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) process (particularly as provided in Appendix A of 23 CFR 450 – Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes) is based on the need to streamline decision-making, improve project delivery, to include environmental considerations in the transportation planning process, and to better link planning with NEPA. Accordingly, the MPO, working with FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), has been working with state and local transportation agencies for the past several years to reduce the duplication of work between transportation planning and NEPA and to reduce potential delays in project delivery as projects move from planning to project design and development. The need for a project to meet fiscal-constraint requirements before the NEPA process can begin is an opportunity for the PEL process to provide initial evaluation of a project without identified construction funding. FHWA has promulgated the Planning/Environmental Linkage Questionnaire. The questionnaire was used as a guide in the development of the identified scope of services.

The PEL process will be used to identify project-specific benefits, issues, concerns, and opportunities at the planning stage, often before project funding has been allocated, at a level of detail and documentation appropriate for use in a later NEPA process. PEL will be used to establish project purpose and need, analyze alternatives, and evaluate environmental impacts and mitigation, all within a framework that can be used in a future NEPA process. In an effort to stream line the process and minimize confusion from members of the public, it is hoped that the following items identified in this scope of work can be conducted in a manner consistent with the PEL process so as to eliminate the need for duplicating this effort and to expedite the process for the development of future transportation facilities.

### **iii. Purpose and Need**

From Appendix A of 23 CFR 450, the MPO's transportation planning process is the primary source of the project purpose and need. The purpose and need will utilize the transportation planning process by referencing the multi-modal Goals and objectives from the transportation planning process with

referencing the financial plan. The use of these planning-level goals and choices must be appropriately explained for subsequent use during NEPA scoping and in the NEPA document.

- 1) Purpose of the proposed action
- 2) Need for the proposed action

#### **iv. Existing project conditions and proposed alternatives**

- 1) Project construction history
- 2) Functional (arterial, collector, etc.) and funding (NHS, Urban, etc.) classification
- 3) Geometry
- 4) Typical Section
- 5) Pavement Conditions
- 6) Traffic Operations and Data
- 7) Structures
- 8) Right-of-Way
- 9) Access Control
- 10) Lighting
- 11) Utilities
- 12) Parking
- 13) Flood Protection System
- 14) Sidewalks, Multi-use Trails, and Shared-use Paths (ADA)
- 15) Pedestrian crossings enhancements
- 16) Landscaping/hardscaping to enhance the corridor between the frontage roads with a keen interest in attention to improving the human scale environment.
- 17) Transit Facilities
- 18) Proposed improvements unique to each build alternative

#### **v. Environmental Impacts**

The baseline information should rely heavily on information already available from agencies responsible for environmental resources (e.g., US Fish and Wildlife Service). Baseline information is typically collected utilizing geographic information systems (GIS) data, combined with a site visit of the study area. The analysis should be of sufficient detail to screen out “fatal flaws” associated with corridor alternatives. The resource information should also consider, build from, and be consistent with other environmental studies that have been completed or are nearing completion in the study area. The environmental overview should not only provide the existing conditions required for evaluating potential environmental consequences, it should also be a strong resource for developing alternatives that will avoid or minimize impacts. The more complete the description, the more accurately constraints on development of alternatives and potential impacts can be assessed. Information gathered in this step is intended to assist with future project-related NEPA clearance. Typically, the information included in the PEL study does not contain the level of information or analysis required for a NEPA-level of study and would be supplemented during the actual NEPA process.

- 1) Land Use
- 2) Prime and Unique Farmlands
- 3) Social
- 4) Relocations
- 5) Economics
- 6) Pedestrians/Bicyclists
- 7) Air Quality
- 8) Noise

- 9) Water Quality
- 10) Wetlands
- 11) Water body modification, wildlife, and invasive plant species
- 12) Floodplain
- 13) State Scenic River
- 14) Threatened and Endangered Species
- 15) Cultural Resources (limited to consultation with appropriate resource agencies and file search activity)
- 16) Hazardous Waste
- 17) Visual
- 18) Energy
- 19) Trees
- 20) Temporary Construction (traffic control, phasing, detours, alternative routes, air, noise, and/or water quality impacts)
- 21) Low income and minority living areas
- 22) Section 4(f) and 6(f) involvement

#### **vi. Study Documentation**

The corridor study should include at a minimum the following documentation:

- 1) Existing and Future Conditions Technical Memorandum
  - a. Shall report on all of the existing conditions that may be required in a future environmental document (elements identified in the scope of work)
- 2) Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum.
  - a. Shall include a full traffic analysis on existing year volumes and future planning year volumes for 2030 and 2045 based upon the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
  - b. Crash analysis from the previous five years. Additional data analysis may be necessary.
- 3) Issues Technical Memorandum
  - a. Shall summarize issues identified within the first two technical memos and issues identified during the public input process. The issues technical memo shall also develop a purpose and need statement for the project.
- 4) Alternative Development Technical Memorandum
  - a. The corridor study should identify a reasonable range of alternatives. The study can reduce the total number of alternatives to be considered in a future NEPA phase by documenting how and why an alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project, as identified in the plan.
  - b. ATAC may be requested to provide the necessary travel demand forecasts based upon the various alternatives selected to have 2030 and 2045 volumes forecasted.
  - c. Shall include a reasonably detailed description of each alternative developed for the project. It should also include a preliminary layout for each technically feasible alternative.

- d. In an effort to provide visualization of alternative concepts, 3D animation is desired. This animation has been used successfully in other MPO studies to convey a better understanding of what may be less familiar alternatives to the local users.

#### 5) Alternative Evaluation Technical Memorandum

- a. Shall include sufficient details to assist with the evaluation of each developed alternative. The list of information that must be included is shown below. Additional information on other items may be included if deemed essential to support the removal of alternatives from further consideration. The alternative evaluation technical memorandum can also identify if any of the developed alternatives do not meet the purpose and need or are deemed technically infeasible and will not be carried into the NEPA phase.
- b. Cost Estimate for each alternative. All project cost summaries and tables will identify the following:
  - 1) Base year of construction costs
  - 2) include engineering and what percentage
  - 3) include land acquisition costs and if so what basis
  - 4) include utility relocation costs and if so what basis.
- c. Readily identifiable planning level impacts for each alternative (e.g. Right of way, utilities, environmental impacts, et al.).
- d. Improvements resulting from each alternative – how does each alternative improve corridor issues and support the purpose and need for the project? (e.g. crash reduction factors, level of service analysis, etc.).

#### 6) Public Input Summary Memorandum

- a. Shall summarize the public input meeting(s) that were completed during the corridor study phase. This should include details regarding how the meeting was advertised and comments to ensure that the meetings were conducted in compliance with the environmental requirements.

#### 7) Implementation Plan Technical Memorandum

- a. Shall identify milestones and phases for the project including timelines for initiation of the NEPA document, Right-of-Way acquisition, project construction year, etc. The implementation plan shall also identify the intended funding for each technically feasible alternative for the project. It could include how local entities plan to fund their share of the project.
- b. Shall lay out a two phased approach to the implementation process.
- c. Recommendations at the intersections for the short term should be developed as a Phase I. Subsequent phases will include long term improvements to the intersection and the 32 Ave S corridor as a whole.

### **D. Public Involvement Process**

## **E. Consultant Responsibilities**

## **F. Project Deliverables**

## **G. Estimated Project Budget**

This project has a not-to-exceed budget of \$110,000. Consultants submitting proposals are asked to use their audited DOT rates when completing their Cost Proposal Form (See Appendix B).

DRAFT

**VIII. INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTANT**

**IX. MAP OF PROJECT AREA – next page**

DRAFT