

**BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 14, 2008**

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on January 14, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. in the Bis-Man Transit Building, 3750 East Rosser Avenue. Chairman Saunders presided.

Members present were Mark Berg, Mel Bullinger, Ben Ehreth, Carl Hokenstad, Kevin Levi, Chuck Morman, Chuck Peterson, Steve Salwei (for Paul Benning), Robin Werre, and Steve Saunders.

Members absent were Paul Benning, Bob Johnston, Jon Mill and Paul Trauger.

Others present were Steve Salwei, Bill Troe.

**MINUTES**

Chairman Saunders called for consideration of the minutes of the December 14, 2007, meeting.

MOTION. Ms. Werre made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2007, meeting. Mr. Bullinger seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Mel Bullinger, Carl Hokenstad, Kevin Levi, Chuck Morman, Chuck Peterson, Robin Werre, and Steve Saunders voting in favor of the motion.

**TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (TE) APPLICATIONS**

Mr. Salwei stated the applications were due November 21, 2007. On the rural side there were 13 applications totaling a little over two million dollars. There is only about \$400,000 available to spend on those projects. On the urban side there were 15 applications exceeding about five million dollars. There is about \$1.1 million available for use. There is a tough task ahead to narrow those projects down. Mr. Kubischta is compiling the information and putting packets together for the Directors Task Force to review and make a recommendation to the Director for his approval. Hopefully the approval will be done by the end of February and the Governor's office should send the official notices out the beginning of March for the projects that were selected.

Mr. Saunders asked if the Committee was meeting in early February. Mr. Salwei said early to mid February.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL UPDATE**

Mr. Salwei stated that on 11/21/07 there were 52 applications, totaling a little over five million dollars, received for infrastructure projects like sidewalks and crossings. There is a little

over \$900,000 funds available. There were 18 applications, totally a little over \$200,000, for non-infrastructure items. There is about \$100,000 available. There is a large need with limited funds available. Of the 18 applications there were 11 combined applications for infrastructure and non-infrastructure. The remaining seven were solely for non-infrastructure. The applications need to be narrowed down for the Director to make his final decision on these projects. However, last year there were approximately the same number of application and there is a seven member steering committee that is given the task to narrow these projects down. They had requested that the DOT look through the project list and that the DOT try to make a preliminary cut of which projects should be carried forward and which ones shouldn't be. Those projects would be given to the steering committee and they would make their selection from that list. That will be tried this year. The book was put together. There is a group of folks that are independently trying to make a selection on which ones they feel should move forward and which ones probably don't meet the criteria. Those recommendations are due today. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator is going to have to look at those to see if there is a consensus and go from there. Depending on selections whole packets may have to be submitted to the seven member committee just so one isn't carried forward that may be an important project. If it is a consensus it can be done. It is to try to make the committee's life easier. More information will be available at the next TAC meeting if the process worked. Once the narrowing down takes place it will take about two or three weeks to reprint all the books and get those sent out to the members. They will probably have two or three weeks to review the selection. They are hoping to have a recommendation to the DOT Director by the end of February and in early March hopefully the final notice can be sent out.

Mr. Saunders asked what the preliminary cut-down number is going to be. Mr. Salwei did not have that number.

Mr. Peterson asked what kinds of mix of people are on the steering committee that reviews these applications. Mr. Salwei stated it is a mix of one from an MPO, small cities, large cities across the state, one from Department of Public Instruction. It is a mix of folks from across the state on that committee. Mr. Peterson asked if they were government workers or common ordinary lay people. Mr. Salwei stated he believes they are government employees or school employees, not just the common person off the street.

## **URBAN PROJECTS LIST SUBMISSION**

Mr. Salwei stated the DOT has not received the official funding level for next year, so they are hoping that in the next couple weeks it will arrive so the program can be finalized. The DOT has put together a draft program. The Cities have submitted their lists, they have been compiled and sent out to the eight Districts for their review and comment. The DOT is hoping the comments will be back shortly and hoping to have the final programs sent out to the Cities and the MPO in the beginning part of March. They are waiting for the final funding level for next year so it can be incorporated into the urban program so they don't have to go back and modify it. Should the funding go up or down the urban program would have to reflect that.

## **UPDATE ON REGIONAL NORTH/SOUTH BELTWAY CORRIDOR STUDY**

Mr. Saunders stated that Mr. Windish is unavailable for today's meeting and tomorrow's meeting. Mr. Saunders stated that the project is 25% completed. There were some public meetings last week. They met with Mandan, Lincoln, Burleigh County and Morton County. Bismarck is still on for January 22, 2008. They will have talked to all the commissioners after that meeting. Mr. Ehreth passed out the two page paper that was given to the commissioners. It was basically a get acquainted meeting and to let the commissioners know what is going on, why it is being done and some of the issues that have come up already. A lot of the Commission seemed to appreciate the idea of updates early on, instead of hearing about it at the final meeting and having to pass judgment on a project that they haven't heard a lot about.

### **UPDATE ON 71<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE/CENTENNIAL ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY**

Mr. Troe handed out copies of the draft report. He had hard copies and CD's available for the members for their review. He stated that the information that was heard at the public meeting in November has been incorporated in this document. A cost estimate has also been added at the end. They are looking at a project cost, going to a three lane concept, with the five lane for Jericho to the south, of about \$8 million. That pretty much gets a three lane section. He added that there is not a tremendous amount of developed right-of-way that would need to be acquired. He believes that the recommendation in the book is consistent with the information that was heard at the public meeting. It is consistent with the traffic volumes that are being forecasted and is also consistent with the idea that 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue will be the north end of the beltway, assuming that is the recommendation that comes out of that study. At the public meeting, when cross sections were being shown, assumptions were made that 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue only showed the five lane cross section. This document also shows three lane because five lanes might not be built right away. They also included the typical cross section of the three lane being expanded into a five lane. The biggest thing there is that the same cross section would be there as the three lane cross section being proposed for Centennial. There would be a six foot shoulder, 12 foot travel lane, 12 or so foot turn lane for the center left turn lane. The biggest difference would be putting in a partial depth shoulder, in this one the shoulder would become part of the travel lane in the future. If the members would like to take the next couple weeks, look through the document and have comments back, the next step would be starting the rounds of the different commissions and a DOT management meeting, get those things done in February and wrap things up in March, which is the current schedule.

Mr. Saunders asked if the cost estimates are in present day dollars. Mr. Troe stated they are in present day dollars. There should probably be a section on inflation assumption since it has to go into TIP, it has to be in the year of construction. Maybe some windows should be in there showing five years, seven years, ten years depending on how long it takes to have a little bit of an idea. The methodology would be used that Federal Highway supports on the cost estimates. He believes it is four percent per year.

Mr. Saunders also asked if Mr. Troe would be agreeable to be part of the steering committee with the Ulteig study on the beltway. He added that the reason he was asking this, through the public meetings and the Commissioners comments, there was some thought that 71<sup>st</sup> isn't the right choice and that maybe 84<sup>th</sup> is the right choice. It might be good if Mr. Troe heard the discussion. Mr. Troe said it was dependant on the schedule. He believes that it does bring

something in, that if the beltway was not on 71<sup>st</sup> and is on 84<sup>th</sup> or even somewhere even further north that it brings into the question, what about the curve of Centennial and 71<sup>st</sup>, then there would be an assumption that at some point in the future that it is a beltway that it would be a four legged or three legged intersection. But if that doesn't end up being a long term idea, is there a burning reason to remove the curve that is out there. Mr. Saunders stated that maybe it does lend something to the argument about the setbacks for the pedestrian trail, maybe it doesn't have to be that far back. Mr. Troe agreed and said another thing is, it has been assumed along 71<sup>st</sup> that a 200 foot right-of-way, when it is reasonable and feasible, when there is a situation that would impact properties, no buildings would be taken, but a 200 foot right-of-way, that is in the concept now and has been since the Northern Bridge Crossing Study and that 200 foot right-of-way would encroach on the 40 foot setbacks for the buildings that are already located along the corridor. It would also start to impact the plantings that people have been putting along the corridor. Initially there was a concern about that, but when you look at the quality of some of those plantings, you kind of scratch your head to whether or not you really want to make it a big deal because there is a lot of loss going on in that corridor of the trees being planted in that corridor. He added that it is probably not for him to comment on. But if 71<sup>st</sup> would not be considered the east-west connection of the beltway, would the 200 foot right-of way be reconsidered as 150 foot right-of-way, which is pretty much out there and is consistent with what is being assumed along Centennial. Maybe it is those two things, what would be done with the curve and what would the impacts to the right-of-way be. There are some costs associated with the right-of-way, but all of that is vacant right now and would be assumed that would need to be acquired.

Mr. Morman stated that Mr. Troe talked about it not being part of the beltway and asked that the whole premise to the beltway to the west would be part of this area, is there talk about moving the beltway further north again? He added that there was already a major study and basically got their heads chopped off during that Northern Bridge Corridor Study, which is directly west of this road. Mr. Saunders stated the commitment is pretty much made up to 83 on 1804. He added that it would probably be conducive to continue it on 71st, there have been some thoughts of maybe, from 83 it should go farther north until it hooks up with 66<sup>th</sup> or 80<sup>th</sup>. He added that it was a separate discussion but he thinks that is the section of 83 that may or may not be moved. It is a discussions area of the steering committee. Mr. Morman asked if that was one mile. Mr. Saunders stated that it is. Mr. Morman asked if that kind of destroys the beltway to put a 90 degree curve for one mile and go back again. Mr. Saunders stated that it is not conducive for a beltway in his opinion. Mr. Hokenstad said that it certainly has to be discussed, it was brought up as an issue, but the whole idea of a beltway is the continuous nature of it. It would be fairly awkward to go along 83 and then jog up a mile and go over. Mr. Saunders stated that it would impact the interchange idea also. Mr. Morman feels that the sight is being lost that was determined two years ago. Mr. Berg stated he feels part of the answer to the question is, if this portion of the beltway is constructed traffic is going to be there. It is going to be difficult to make a route one mile north, because it was a public comment it still has to be addressed what the pluses and minuses are and let it shake out through the process. It was part of the public input meeting, if they are coming across on 1804 will they jog back a mile, no because this is an established route, it is built to do what it was intended to do. But the people coming from the north may pick up on the 84<sup>th</sup> route to go east and come further south to go west. It will still work it is just that he doesn't see people getting off the west side of Mandan, getting on the

beltway and going all the way across and getting back on the Interstate. It doesn't serve a whole lot of purpose and as long as the Fringe Area Road Master Plan is followed in building the principal arterial routes up to a reasonable standard, anybody that wants to use the sub-network streets, the arterials versus the beltway, it is not going to be a real issue. Mr. Berg states he does agree with what Mr. Morman is saying. Mr. Berg added that Ulteig and URS still have to go through the questions and once it is laid out in front of them the logistics and what has already been gone through, it will probably go away. Mr. Troe added that it is broke down by components, from the right-of-way standpoint, you probably would have to acquire more right-of-way on 84<sup>th</sup>, and there may be less development so that is a positive. However, every time you move it north there will be less and less traffic where it is going to pull less off the streets that already has more development along them. Mr. Berg said 110<sup>th</sup> should have probably been the road that was looked at, when the bridge study came out it was 20 or 30 years, it is probably going to be longer than that. These are going to be continual jumps. Mr. Morman feels that sometimes the committees are short sighted. He said he remembers when there was nothing going north of the interstate and that Bismarck-Mandan was going to die. Now there is the same thing with the northern corridor, now it is being talked about moving it a mile further north. Politically it can't be moved a mile north of Mandan without being assassinated by the people up there because one house was going to be affected by something or other. It seems that everything is so short sighted. Mr. Berg stated that looking at the effort that goes into actually completing construction, in 2003 Bismarck Expressway was finally finished into an expressway system. In 2003 it was still a rural roadway with two lanes, poor shoulders and traffic issues. It was completed and development is three miles north of there or more. By the time the expenditure is justified Bismarck is going to be hopefully beyond this. Mr. Berg added that he and Mr. Saunders have had discussions about being short-sighted, should it be way out there. Mr. Saunders stated that one of the reasons this spot was chosen was the alignment, you probably couldn't have a bridge at 110<sup>th</sup>, and there are factors that precipitate some of that. Mr. Hokenstad asked if right-of-way was going to be narrowed down in certain stretches. Mr. Troe stated that it was agreed on in the areas where there was development, it was narrowed to 170 feet. A five lane section can still fit there, the ditch will be a little shallower, and the design guys will work on that, the slopes down and up have to be looked at. That would eliminate the issue with the setback, that is the primary focus, the trees are important, but the idea of infringing on the setback and the public entity needing a variance to their own regulations or buying properties is a problem. The right-of-way was narrowed to 170 feet and still leaves the question out there, if the beltway is not at that location, 150 feet would have to be looked at. The idea of that precipitates the three lane cross section out there. There might be a timing issue; quite possibly, well it should be pretty well set by the time the funding is available for that piece and building it because the study has just been done on the beltway. Where a sidewalk or trail might be along 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue as part of the 71<sup>st</sup> and Centennial work, it will have to be played by ear for the next month or six weeks on what comes out of the Commission meetings. Mr. Saunders said he agrees with Mr. Berg and this discussion has to happen. Mr. Troe stated everything is in the document that would be needed to shuffle stuff around if something was to change from the assumptions. All that would have to be done is add a section on the decision for a beltway and what it does to the assumptions on where the bike path would be.

## **TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION STUDY UPDATE**

Mr. Berg stated the announcement came out in the paper January 11, 2008. There has been a lot of interest already by the consultants. The RFP's have been sent to those who requested them and some questions have been answered. He feels there will be a ton of questions coming. He also said that he has made the contacts to set up the selection group.

## **2009 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN RFP AND AD**

Mr. Ehreth stated that the RFP and ad was in the packets. He gave a brief overview of the RFP. He said the scope of work requires some minimum requirements for the consultant to meet. Effectively it has been left fairly open ended, and that was somewhat intentional, to allow some room for flexibility and innovation by the consultants and may in fact help in the selection process when they submit their proposals. The public involvement section about midway through the document is a little more extensive than has been done in the past Long Range Transportation updates. That was a fairly significant part of the proposal. Some of the significant dates, if this board and Policy Board are comfortable with the RFP and ad, the advertising in the Tribune would hopefully be at the end of this week or early next week. The MPO would like the RFP's due by February 15, 2008 with an estimated Policy Board decision by March, 2008 and looking at a beginning date for the study around April, 2008. Ultimately looking for a draft of the study to be done by August 2009 with a final study to be completed by December 2009. There are seven criteria the MPO is looking for in the selection process: past performance; the ability of the professional personnel; willingness to meet time and budget requirements; location of the consultant because of selection criteria; current projected workloads of the staff in the firm; any related experience or similar projects; project understanding issues and approach. The selection team will be seven members to select the consultant. Each of the five jurisdictions will have representation on that committee. In addition, a NDDOT representative and a representative from the MPO will also be on the committee. This was forwarded to a few of the members in the jurisdictions to take a look at it and review it. There were some preliminary comments that were incorporated into this document.

Mr. Morman had a question about the current projected workloads of the staff in the firm, he wondered if it was necessary to put that in the RFP. He understands that it is in all of them but is wondering if there is a reason for it. Mr. Saunders stated that no consultant is going to say they have too much work, but the selection team goes through a background check to see who the team believes is too busy. Mr. Morman asked if that was based on what the consultants tell the committee. Mr. Saunders said no. Mr. Salwei said on the DOT side, for the urban program, he knows which consultants are doing what work for which cities for which projects, he can bring that to the table on the urban side, he can check on the county side and state side also. He has a pretty good handle on what consultants are doing what projects for the state. However, he does not have a good handle on what is going on out of state. There is a little internal background check to see what they are working on and what their timelines are. Mr. Morman asks how you really know what they are working on because nobody checks with Minneapolis or Chicago. Are they working with people all over the place, or hiring more people because they are working with Atlanta or something. We don't get into that depth of it, so we don't really know for sure. We look at all this stuff and say, ya this is great, we are going to pick this group, their workload is great, they have the five or ten people listed, they are good to go, I don't really

know that. Mr. Ehreth said he believes it adds more weight as the study progress and they are telling you in their proposal that, yes we do have the staff time to work on this, but as the study progresses and they may run into some time constraints and the proposal can be referred back to and say there was enough staff to work on the study, and why is more time needed now. Mr. Troe said that the process that is generally followed here is relatively quick turnaround to short listing and a suggestion is somebody needs to do a little bit more checking with the references and ask exactly the questions that are in the criteria. Somebody has to chase down the people and check them out and include them in the tables. Mr. Saunders said that it is not necessarily graded on what the consultants say, it is what the committee finds out and grade on that. Mr. Morman agreed that the MPO is held responsible to check these issues out. Mr. Saunders agreed and said sometimes it works to the consultants advantage, if they have a project close by, maybe in Mandan or in the tribal area south of Mandan that might work conducive for traveling and such. If a company has a lot of projects in Fargo in the same time frame it is probably not going to be conducive. Mr. Berg stated it helps to list a person to contact for questions because then that person shouldn't be on the selection committee. Everybody can focus on one person to get the same answers. It wouldn't be fair to have the person on the selection committee answer questions. Mr. Saunders stated that one of the things talked about was this study will be SAFTEA-LU compliant as per the present regulation structure with Federal Highway. He has also looked at transportation issues up to 2035, which is five years farther than the previous Long Range Transportation Plan. The selected consultant will make nine personal appearances. There will also be a short list in the event that five or more consulting firms submit proposals a qualifying screening will be based on written submission proposals to get down to as few as three. Mr. Morman asked if this was part of federal requirements to have this every five years. Mr. Saunders stated that it is required. He added that this should be completed by 2009 so that it will be on schedule in 2014 to be able to make good use of the census data that will be out after the 2010 census. In the past these have always been on the wrong end of the data. Mr. Troe stated that it also puts the MPO in good position relative to the next transportation bill because the project list should be put together and start working on the congressional delegation for earmark. It would be a fresh plan rather than something that is four and a half years old. It would sound like pet projects are being talked about opposed to something that has some analysis.

MOTION. Mr. Morman made a motion to approve the 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan RFP and ad and forward it to the Policy Board with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Hokenstad seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Mel Bullinger, Carl Hokenstad, Kevin Levi, Chuck Morman, Chuck Peterson, Robin Werre, and Steve Saunders voting in favor of the motion.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Saunders stated that the interview process is ongoing to replace the office assistant. The MPO has had one interview and is planning on having some more.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m. to meet again on February 19, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Diana Nadeau  
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:

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Steve Saunders, Chair