

BISMARCK-MANDAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Policy Board
April 15, 2008

The Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board met on April 15, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. in the Bis-Man Transit Building, 3750 East Rosser Avenue. Chairman Erhardt presided.

Members present were Matt Erhardt, Dave Bechted (representing Ken LaMont), Doug Schonert, and John Warford

Members absent were Ken LaMont and Glenn Christmann.

Others present were Ben Ehreth, Bill Troe, Mel Bullinger, Robin Werre, Mohammad Smadi (by telephone) and Gordon Weixel.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Erhardt called for consideration of the minutes of the March 18, 2008 meeting.

MOTION. Mr. Schonert made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2008, meeting. Mr. Warford seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Matt Erhardt, Dave Bechted, Doug Schonert, and John Warford voting in favor of the motion.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE ITS (INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM) ARCHITECTURE UPDATE

Mr. Smadi stated that the ITS update was a federal requirement for potential federal funding for ITS projects. They used Bismarck-Mandan region ITS stakeholders to assist in the update. The report was completed and submitted to the Bismarck-Mandan MPO TAC (Technical Advisory Committee). The Bismarck-Mandan MPO TAC recommended approval (with the following recommendations that Page 9 Section 4.1.5 – first paragraph last sentence change “Last Year” to reflect that fixed route service began in the Bismarck-Mandan area in 2004 and incorporate an “Acronyms” list into the document).

Mr. Erhardt inquired as to discussions which occurred at the Bismarck-Mandan MPO TAC? Mr. Ehreth reiterated the two modifications that the Bismarck-Mandan MPO recommended.

Mr. Warford asked if this was just to accept the report? Mr. Ehreth indicated that was correct.

Mr. Schonert inquired about the communication infrastructure in Figure 4.4? Mr. Ehreth indicated it was updating what had occurred since the previous ITS update effort. Mr. Smadi indicated that it was reflective of what communication that the ITS devices use.

Mr. Schonert asked if all of the entities could communicate? Mr. Ehreth indicated that part of the intention of the document was to identify which devices could communicate with each other.

Mr. Erhardt inquired about the possibility of a new communication center and if this would be compatible with the subject effort? Mr. Smadi indicated that was beyond the scope of this particular ITS update.

Mr. Erhardt inquired about a potential problem with “Metro Area Ambulance” in terms of response time? Mr. Smadi indicated that was not part of the ITS update.

Mr. Warford inquired about dynamic message signs? Mr. Smadi indicated that information dissemination was addressed by the State of North Dakota. Mr. Ehreth indicated that currently there are no dynamic message signs in the Bismarck-Mandan area but that they are identified as being a potential element in the ITS Architecture and that the NDDOT has indicated interest in locating the subject devices in the Bismarck-Mandan area at some time in the future. Mr. Warford inquired as to the potential location of the dynamic message signs? Mr. Smadi was unaware of a specific location at this point in time. Mr. Warford inquired if there would be a dynamic message sign west of Mandan? Mr. Smadi was unaware of where the specific location would be located, however identified a variety of factors that may be considered when sighting the location. Mr. Erhardt expressed that he felt there should be more than one dynamic message sign in the Bismarck-Mandan area. Mr. Smadi indicated that cost will likely be an issue. Mr. Warford asked about the source of the information for the dynamic message sign? Mr. Smadi indicated that the source of the information was from the Central Office of the NDDOT.

MOTION. Mr. Warford made a motion to accept the Bismarck-Mandan MPO ITS Architecture Update. Mr. Schonert seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Matt Erhardt, Dave Bechted, Doug Schonert, and John Warford voting in favor of the motion.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2009 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN CONTRACT

Mr. Ehreth stated that URS/Houston Engineering were selected to develop the Bismarck-Mandan MPO Long Range Transportation Plan and that Bill Troe from URS was present. A contract was negotiated for the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan and was included as “Exhibit A” in the Policy Board agenda packets. The contract was within the budget and the Long Range Transportation Plan will be SAFETEA-LU compliant. The Bismarck-Mandan MPO legal council, as well as, MPO staff reviewed and are comfortable with the contract and Scope of Work. The proposed Long Range Transportation Plan has a heightened focus on public involvement, freight movements, safety and security, and non-motorized movements compared to previous Long Range Transportation Plan efforts.

Mr. Troe discussed material which was handed out describing elements in the proposed Long Range Transportation Plan which are perhaps different than previous Long Range Transportation Plan efforts. The public involvement process will be more extensive than

previous Long Range Transportation Plan efforts. The public involvement process for the proposed Long Range Transportation plan would include a Citizens Committee made up of residents from various geographic locations throughout the Bismarck-Mandan MPO Study Area, as well as, representatives from key transportation stakeholder groups. In addition the proposed Long Range Transportation Plan will consider projects and associated costs based on projected available funding in relation to projected inflation. It is anticipated that there may be a gap between the rate of inflation and the amount of future available funding. It is possible that the rate of inflation may be greater than the increased amount of future available funding potentially decreasing the amount of projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan which have previously been identified.

Mr. Erhardt inquired about increased project costs? Mr. Troe responded that we are now required to consider inflation when identifying potential projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Erhardt discussed inflation issues associated with a variety of Morton County projects.

Mr. Warford identified the public involvement process as being one of the most costly elements of the proposed Long Range Transportation Plan, however identified it as being a necessary part of the development of the document.

MOTION. Mr. Warford made a motion to award the contract of the 2009-2035 Bismarck-Mandan MPO Long Range Transportation Plan to URS/Houston Engineering. Mr. Schonert seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Matt Erhardt, Dave Beched, Doug Schonert, and John Warford voting in favor of the motion.

Mr. Schonert commented on one of the US Presidential candidate's proposal for a federal gas tax free holiday from Memorial Day to Labor Day and how that could impact proposed transportation projects in the future.

Mr. Warford indicated that he may have to leave the Policy Board Meeting early and asked if item # 8 (Possible Approval of the Update on 71st Avenue/Centennial Road Corridor Study) could be moved up to the next item, as it is the only remaining action item. All members in attendance were comfortable with the suggestion.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 71ST AVENUE/CENTENNIAL ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY

Mr. Troe referenced the final draft of the 71st Avenue/Centennial Road Corridor Study in the Policy Board packets. The most significant change from the draft included the implementation schedule. The schedule for implementation was lengthened with a refined prioritization of specific segments of the corridor to address funding issues.

Mr. Schonert suggested there should be a preliminary agreement between the involved parties that if improvements are justified from the study there would be some guarantee of funding available for the subject improvements.

MOTION. Mr. Schonert made a motion to accept the 71st Avenue/Centennial Road Corridor Study. Mr. Warford seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved with Matt Erhardt, Dave Bechted, Doug Schonert, and John Warford voting in favor of the motion.

Mr. Erhardt moved the original item # 9 (Update on the Bismarck Traffic Signal Optimization/Coordination Study) to the next item.

BISMARCK TRAFFIC SIGNAL OPTIMIZATION/COORDINATION STUDY

Mr. Troe indicated they are beginning the Bismarck Traffic Optimization/Coordination Study. In the near future they will be in the field collecting data for the study. Some of the locations have detectors so they will be able to utilize that data as well. From the collected data they will be able to identify characteristics in the traffic patterns to assist in the signal coordination.

Mr. Warford inquired if the results from this optimization study could be incorporated into other signals within the community? Mr. Troe indicated that it could not, however the model being developed for the study could be expanded to incorporate other corridors within Bismarck for future traffic signal optimization efforts. Mr. Warford restated the question using Avenue C, 3rd Street, and 4th Street as an example. Mr. Troe indicated they could incorporate a cursory look at three additional intersections (associated with Avenue C, Washington Street, 3rd Street, and 4th Street) into the study.

Mr. Erhardt and Ms. Werre discussed a recent transit meeting sponsored by the AARP.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (TE) APPLICATIONS

Mr. Ehreth stated that the NDDOT management team has made a decision on the projects and “Yes” letters have been sent out and “No” letters will be forthcoming. In the Bismarck-Mandan MPO are the multi-use path along Highway 1806 in Morton County was selected.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL UPDATE

Mr. Ehreth stated that staff from the NDDOT indicated that “Yes” letters should be sent out within the next two weeks.

URBAN PROJECTS LIST SUBMISSION

Mr. Ehreth distributed the latest draft of the Bismarck-Mandan Urban Program list. Mr. Ehreth stated that additions to the Urban Program list included: the multi-use path along Highway 1806 for Mandan; and rehabilitation of US Highway 83 from Calgary Avenue to 57th Avenue for Bismarck. The NDDOT would like a formal approval by the Bismarck and Mandan City Commissions on the proposed Urban Program projects for the respective cities.

UPDATE ON REGIONAL NORTH/SOUTH BELTWAY CORRIDOR STUDY

Mr. Ehreth stated that there was a North/South Beltway stakeholder meeting held since the March Policy Board Meeting. Two issues were identified on the Mandan/Morton County side of the beltway during the decision making process: the slope stability along the preliminary route and the best location to cross both the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and the Heart River. The preliminary alignments for both an interim and ultimate beltway have been identified. Therefore; it will be important to explain to area residents that both the interim beltway alignment and ultimate beltway alignment corridors will need to be preserved with adequate right-of-way to facilitate future beltway construction. The interim alignment would follow 37th St., North Dakota Highway 25, 24th Ave., and 46th Street and the ultimate alignment would follow 24th Ave., and 46th St.

Mr. Ehreth further stated that some citizens have voiced concerns regarding impacts that may result from future interchanges at 66th St. and US Highway 83. The 66th St., 80th St., 84th Ave., and 71st Ave. corridors will all eventually become arterial roadways as the metropolitan area continues to grow. A decision was made to continue with the analysis of one preliminary beltway alignment along 71st Ave. N., 66th St., and 48th Ave. S. Further analysis will investigate right-of-way impacts; access management, design speed, beltway geometrics, beltway surfacing, and construction cost for the preliminary beltway alignment. Issues will need to be identified in order to prevent major design or construction problems in the future. The next “public process” is scheduled for June 2008.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. to meet again on May 20, 2008, at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Ehreth
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:

Mr. Erhardt, Chair