

Steering Committee Meeting Summary
Bismarck Mandan MPO
Regional North-South Beltway Corridor Study
September 20, 2007
10:00 a.m.

See attendance roster for those in attendance.

Introductions and General Overview

Steve Grabill reviewed the overall project schedule. Steve is working with ATAC to develop traffic projections. The first public involvement meeting will be in early December. Today's meeting is initial gear up for the public meeting.

The next steering committee is scheduled for mid October to discuss what will be included in the public involvement meeting.

Mark Berg asked whether Morton County and the City of Lincoln were invited. They were invited but are not attending. Ulteig Engineers will complete the Study by the contractual completion date, though the process started about a month and a half late. The progress should be on schedule by mid 2008. Monthly status reports will include milestone reports. If any milestones dates are lagging, the report will explain why and what is needed to get back on schedule.

Data Needs

- a. Typical sections for the proposed roadways are needed to develop the opinion of costs. It is anticipated that the typical sections will be similar to 66th Street. Morton County side, 25th Avenue and ND Highway 6. The typical section must be consistent between this study and 71st Avenue study. Steve Saunders is coordinating the two studies.

Steve Grabill said that inclusion of that study consultant with this process will be as needed. Coordination of public process between the two projects will be considered and implemented if it benefits the projects. Jon Mill asked whether the traffic projections from ATAC for the 71st Avenue project are to be used for the beltway study. Steve Grabill stated that they are not looking at projections in that study.

- b. Drainage and utility information can be acquired from the regional land use plan, which contains most of the information needed. Box culvert and bridge size information will be needed. No drainage studies have been completed in Burleigh County for future needs. Ulteig Engineers should speak with Linda Oster regarding watershed master planning.

The railroad grade separation on 66th Street will be tied to the Apple Creek crossing structure.

- c. Ulteig Engineers contacted ATAC early in the project. The discussion included how the information will be used. The data was requested for 66th Street and 25th Avenue with and without northern bridge. They were requested to model this with optional beltway overpasses and interchanges. The data will be used to determine what the interchanges are doing for us. Also, timing of improvements can be determined using this data. We will consider the possibility of needing first a grade separation and then ramps later on.

Mark Berg is concerned that the study was to determine whether interchanges were justified and this approach does not appear to be heading in that direction. It appears the study is focusing on the beltway. The City of Lincoln has been saying they need an interchange to improve access to the City.

Steve Grabill replied that in order to have justification for any interchange the study will need to show what an interchange does compared to no interchange. The study will evaluate a standard diamond interchange, maybe loops, and will be looking at different footprints. There is concern that this is too detailed at this time.

Steve Grabill replied that the study is to determine how much right of way is needed. The study will consider quadrant development and attempt to avoid conflicts. Study should recommend configurations based upon conflicts. The study will not develop profiles, just configuration.

ATAC has collected good data; they just need to have good projections. Steve Grabill mentioned that the projection information may be suspect. The model gives a good idea of how much traffic is out there, but may not be placing it in the correct spot. The study will require careful analysis.

Jon Mill concurred that sometimes he is not comfortable with ATAC projections. The 71st Avenue corridor study for example has projections overly focused on land use. Steve Grabill said this is a tool, not gospel. State Street is shown approximately 50% over capacity. Will discuss with ATAC and review interpretations, let them react.

- d. Mailing lists – large mailing. All property owners within ½ mile of proposed routes. Who should Ulteig Engineers work with in each jurisdiction? The recorder and auditor offices should have this. Reassess the size of mail outs after the first public meeting. Some alternate routes may be eliminated thus reducing size of mailing.

Corridor Justification Methods

Steve Grabill distributed a handout that indicated various justification criteria for the beltway, as well as reasons to pursue corridor preservation. Traffic relief was the only analytical criteria listed. All others were non analysis reasons, warm and fuzzy reasons.

Ulteig Engineers will use the outline as an educational tool. We will keep coming back to these points throughout the process. Elected officials can see the analysis process.

Status reports

The Steering Committee discussed methods of keeping elected officials and appointed officials up-to-date. There will be periodic face to face meeting updates.

Steve Grabill felt the draft Commission Status Report looks “engineer generated”, it needs to be softened up.

Ulteig Engineers asked how to submit these Reports to the commissions. One suggestion is to send to commissioners directly, don’t include in packets. It does not have to be part of public record. Steve Saunders suggested emails and mail outs. Mark Berg will get back to Ulteig Engineer on how to submit to the City of Bismarck.

It was discussed that it is hard to raise level of interest until something needs to be decided. The various commissions will have the information as the project progress. Briefer reports are better, include only what is important, emerging issues, bullet points. Each jurisdiction needs to decide on distribution method. Steve Windish asked Committee members for assistance in determining how their respective Commissions should be kept informed.

Discuss potential routes

Throughout the Northern Bridge Corridor Study the public asked why here, why not somewhere else. This study will need a good answer to this question. The preliminary routes are general locations, not detailed. The final location can move 50 feet or more.

Section 31 south of Lincoln is platted or will be platted as “Cooper Ridge”. There is considerable low density development along 80th Street. The City of Lincoln needs to have input as to what route they prefer. Right of way dedication through development has been based upon the beltway indicated in the Long Range Fringe Area Master Plan.

There are two new industrial developments north of Lincoln on 66th Street, based upon the Master Plan.

The route diagonally crossing Section 24 west of Mandan is through a major hillside slide area. This route should be removed from the drawing. The routes outside the southwest MPO border may be too far out for users to consider.

The map should be posted on the website, as soon as the website is operational.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Windish, PE
Ulteig Project Manager