

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** April 5, 2013

**To:** Mayor Lynn Stauss. Council President Craig Buckalew, Vice President Greg Leigh, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Ron Vonasek, Henry Tweten, Mark Olstad, and Chad Grassel

**From:** Scott Huizenga

**RE:** Weekly Update

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

*Work Session – April 9, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Training Room*

*Regular Council Meeting – April 16, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers*

*Work Session – April 23, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Training Room*

*Regular Council Meeting – May 7, 2013 – 5:00 PM – Council Chambers*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Legislative Update**

The Legislature returned from its annual spring recess this week. The House Tax Committee reviewed HF 1608 on Local Government Aid (LGA) reform. The House bill includes the proposed new funding formula as endorsed by several organizations including the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) and the League of Minnesota Cities. However, the House version appeared with only \$60 million in new funding as opposed to the \$80 million increase included in the Governor's budget and in several legislative plans. The increase of \$80 million figure was very important to reduce the impact of the new funding formula, which gradually redistributes portions of LGA to the metropolitan area. Under the current House version, East Grand Forks LGA would be \$2,510,682 under the \$80 million option. The \$60 million option would net \$2,500,752 in 2014; a difference of \$9930. The current year allotment to the City is \$2,471,550. Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) published an article Thursday that explains well how [the LGA program remains 40 percent below its peak funding](#) level even with the proposed increases and adjusting for inflation.

State parks and trails funding has re-emerged as an issue at the capitol. In the previous legislative session, the state opted to designate state funding based on a funding split of 40 percent to the state Department of Natural Resources, 40 percent to metro parks and trails, and 20 percent to Greater Minnesota. Greater Minnesota communities advocated for an even distribution of one third to each target. Now, the metropolitan groups are again gearing to increase their share of the overall funding by arguing that they have greater population bases. Greater Minnesota interests contend that that they already receive the smallest portion of funding. And, while the areas may be less-densely populated, Greater Minnesota parks and trails of regional and statewide appeal to visitors and tourists.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

### **Parks and Recreation, Dave Aker**

#### **CIVIC CENTER REPAIRS**

The arenas at the Civic Center and VFW have all the ice off and are shut down. At the Civic Center we are in the process of taking the circulating pumps off and getting them repaired. The compressor that ran by itself for part of the winter, we are going to get that one serviced. The ice at the Blue Line Arena goes until April 28, then at the end of May we put the ice on the VFW Arena for another month.

#### **SWIMMING POOL PUMP**

The new pump for the swimming pool is in and we are in the process of putting it in. The pump we had last year was taken out and delivered back to the Grand Forks Park District. The walls in the pool have to be fixed and we are waiting for the frost to come up and see if we have anymore to do.

#### **JOSE COLE CIRCUS**

The circus was on April 3 at the Civic Center, each year we have the circus the Home Run Club makes 20% of the total taken in. The money is used to pay the umpires for the Cal Ripken baseball league, both the major and minor leagues.

### **Police Department, Chief Mike Hedlund**

#### **Spring Flooding**

Over the next several weeks the Red and Red Lake Rivers will begin to flood throughout the region. The flood waters can be an interesting attraction and people often walk on the flood control structures in an attempt to get a better view of the river. The City of East Grand Forks is requesting that people please stay away from the waters and off of the levee systems. Spring flood waters are very cold and move quickly. They can be very dangerous for sight seers and also for emergency personnel that might have to respond if someone should fall in. Please help keep this Spring a safe one and stay off of the levees and away from the rivers. Thank you!

#### **Traffic Safety**

The thaw and freeze cycles common in our Spring weather often create slippery surfaces on our roadways. Drivers need to be aware of this and realize that conditions can change significantly from one area to another. Shaded areas, such as those under bridges, are often coated with ice much later in the day than streets that are open to sunshine. Use caution and stay safe!

### **Public Works, Jason Stordahl**

#### **PUBLIC WORKS**

*Streets/Storm Water-* Staff has nearly finished hauling away snow piles throughout the city, and is focusing more on opening catch basins to allow the remainder of the melting snow to flow.

*River Forecast-* There has been no change in this week's river level forecast. Temperatures are forecasted to remain about the same for another week and a half. This weather pattern is excellent for melting snow as long as it holds.

Storm Water staff has been lowering pumps at lift stations in preparation of rising river levels. And other staff are prepared to start erecting floodwalls if need be in the coming weeks.

### **Fire Department, Gary Larson**

The monthly training drill this month was on Incident Safety Officer. We had an instructor come in from Fargo to instruct, which was paid for by a grant from the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education. It was a very good class on keep up with safety on incidents.

The Fire Dept hosted a class on the operation of Code Red for dept heads. This program will allow the City to do reverse 911 calls to specific areas of town to alert residents of issues, such as snow removal, power outage, active shooter, haz-mat release, and other items. This is supplied by Polk County. Residents can go on Polk county website and sign up for Code Red weather alerts for free.

April 4 we responded to a fire at American Crystal in the B pulp drier. Fire was under control in short order with minimum damage.

I have attended Regional and State meetings on 2013 Flood Preparedness.

We have been dealing with warning siren problems. We hope to have them all operational this week.

### **Agenda Items:**

1. Council Member Leigh will discuss citizen complaints of parking issues at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW near 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The intersection has been the focal point of several parking issues in the recent past. Residents at the nearby multi-family residential complex use both 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW and 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The City changed the parking ordinance in 2009 to allow parking only along the south side of 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The change allowed for greater snow removal capacity and better traffic flow for high school traffic, including school buses. The ordinance had the foreseeable effect of pushing some overflow parking from 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. Some residents in the area would like to see parking restrictions or other alternatives to reduce street parking on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW.
2. The City Engineer will present a proposed City application for the Corridor Investment Management Strategy (CIMS) program. CIMS represents the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)'s new philosophy to highway funding that emphasizes local partnerships to employ "lower cost, high benefit investment strategies that address safety, access and mobility." The East Grand Forks proposal would apply for several improvements along the Highway 220 (Central Avenue) corridor. The improvements would include expanded trail access to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, a traffic signal at 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, an additional northbound lane from 20<sup>th</sup> Street-23<sup>rd</sup> Street, ADA improvements, and several street scaping and beautification improvements. The proposals all comply with the City's adopted Central Avenue corridor plan. And, the application serves MnDOT's

interest on “high return” on investment projects that expand economic development and improve multi-modal access. The CIMS program requires a minimum 10-percent local match. The total project estimate is \$2.1 million, with a local match of just over \$200,000. MnDOT’s long-term plan appears to consolidate several highway funding programs into just a few that focus on its key outcomes. The City will have fewer opportunities for other types of highway funding moving forward. Staff believes that the plan’s alignment with MnDOT’s goals and with the City’s long-standing corridor strategy enhance the quality of the application.

3. The City Attorney will review a proposed revision to the City’s adult use zoning ordinance. The current proposal abolishes the current definition of adult use. It also establishes a 60-day moratorium on any establishment of a sexually-oriented business in the City while the City studies the issue to issue revised definitions. The ordinance does not impact any existing adult uses within city limits.
4. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent will review with the City Council the revised recommendation for Parks and Recreation arena and maintenance staffing. The proposal represents a staffing change following the pending retirement of an arena manager. The recommendation would include one remaining arena manager while converting one vacant arena manager position and several part-time positions into two full-time parks maintenance positions to provide full-time coverage at the arenas and offer additional support to park maintenance.
5. Council President Buckalew will update the City Council on the Planning Commission activities.
6. Council Member Vonasek will update the City Council on the Polk County Planning Board activities.

# Corridor Investment Management Strategy

About CIMS

## What is CIMS?

CIMS is a corridor-based initiative that brings MnDOT together with its local, modal and state partners to identify opportunities for collaborative and innovative investment. It offers a means to share information and identify opportunities to apply MnDOT's suite of lower cost, high benefit investment strategies that address safety, access and mobility.

MnDOT will facilitate annual CIMS meetings and an interactive website that brings MnDOT together with its partners to exchange information and discuss opportunities for collaborative and sustainable investment. Investment opportunities identified through the CIMS process will be considered for a competitive solicitation to be launched in 2013. Additionally, for each corridor MnDOT will channel input received through the CIMS process into a 10-year Corridor Outlook, which will be updated annually.

## Laying the Foundation

MnDOT's [sustainability initiative](#) ensures MnDOT business practices, services and facilities support economic opportunity, community well-being and the natural environment. Sustainable transportation practices respect, support and regenerate environmental systems, the economy and society over many generations.

In 2011, MnDOT adopted the [Minnesota GO Vision](#) that set out to keep Minnesota's transportation system on a sustainable track for the future.

- Leverage public funds to achieve multiple purposes
- Ensure accessibility
- Build to a maintainable scale
- Ensure regional connections
- Integrate safety
- Emphasize reliable and predictable options
- Strategically fix the system
- Use partnerships

## Operationalizing Minnesota GO through CIMS

Given the magnitude and condition of our current transportation system, the state and federal funding realities, and the unlikely reality of additional funds (i.e. earmarks), MnDOT seeks collaborative, sustainable transportation strategies that leverage investments to achieve multiple public purposes.

CIMS provides MnDOT and its partners an ongoing process to:

- Share information about investment programs and the needs, issues and opportunities at a corridor-level; and

MnDOT recently completed extensive market research where Minnesotans defined what quality of life means and how transportation contributes to it. MnDOT learned that some key quality of life factors are linked. For example, Minnesotans identified Transportation, Employment, Education, Environment and Housing as related QOL factors.

The CIMS process will incorporate this market research by asking MnDOT partners to consider quality of life factors when describing what they envision for a corridor.

In addition, MnDOT is inviting state agencies to help drive the conversation and share their expertise related to these contributing factors to quality of life along the corridors.

## Toward Zero Deaths

Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths initiative uses a combination of proven safety strategies – the four E's – to drive the number of fatalities on Minnesota roads down to zero. The four E's are:

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Emergency Medical and Trauma Services

CIMS is an opportunity to apply Minnesota's TZD approach at a corridor level.

## Suite of Lower Cost, High Benefit Strategies

Examples of lower cost, high benefit strategies that may be applied to corridors throughout the state:

### **2+1.**

A 2+1 road design has a continuous three-lane cross section with alternating passing lanes. Traditionally, two lanes travel in one direction and one lane in the other; this design usually alternates through a stretch of highway.



### **Super Two.**

A Super Two highway is a road design where a periodic passing lane is added to a two-lane rural highway to allow passing of slower vehicles and the dispersal of traffic. A Super Two may take different forms, including:

- A 4-foot-wide buffer area with rumble strips that provides errant driver recovery space
- A 12-foot-wide buffer area that provides recovery space as well as turn lanes

**Reducing risk at intersections:**  
 A number of strategies exist to reduce risks at intersections. Some are considered **Reduced Conflict Intersections** which take away high-risk actions, such as making a left turn from a side-street, and instead allow drivers to make a left turn using two lower-risk actions. For example, to make a left turn onto a 4-lane road, drivers would first make a right turn, travel a short distance, then move into a left turn lane where they can make a U-turn and proceed toward their desired direction. In some instances, U-turns can be made at adjoining intersections or through an existing interchange.



## MnPASS Express Lanes

**MnPASS** is a cost-effective strategy for managing congestion, using existing road capacity to reduce travel times on some of the busiest, most congested roads. MnPASS benefits Minnesota taxpayers by providing:

- Travel choices and a safe, reliable and predictable travel time
- Additional highway capacity when it is needed most, during rush hours
- A system that moves more people at a lower cost than regular lanes
- Revenue to operate, maintain and improve the MnPASS system

