



243 High Street Room 026  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
(304) 291-9571  
[www.plantgether.org](http://www.plantgether.org)

### Agenda

Citizens Advisory Committee  
243 High Street Room 026 and by WEBEX  
Morgantown WV  
August 10, 2023

6:00 PM

1. Call To Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment
4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment
5. Status of Suballocated funds project applications
6. Other Business
7. Meeting Adjournment



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## Memorandum

**Date:** August 2, 2023  
**To:** CAC Members  
**From:** Bill Austin, AICP  
**Subject:** August 10, 2023 CAC Meeting Agenda Items

This memorandum is to inform you of the items under consideration in the August CAC Agenda.

**-TIP Amendments and Adjustments-**MPO staff is requesting that the Policy Board amend the TIP to include suballocated STBG funding for the Downtown Microsimulation Study Scope of Work. The TTAC and CAC previously reviewed the scope of work for this project and the participating entities have provided the match necessary for the project. This match has been forwarded to WVDOH and the project has a Federal Project number. The details of the proposed TIP Amendment are below:

**Downtown Morgantown Microsimulation Study** Project Number STBG2023315D Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds suballocated to the MMMPO \$500,000-Federal Funds \$400,000 Local funds \$100,000

It is respectfully requested that the CAC recommend approval of the TIP Amendment to the MPO Policy Board.

**-Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment-**Please see the memorandum transmitted with the Agenda for more information on this item.



## CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

This meeting was held virtually at <https://morgantownmonongaliampo.my.webex.com/meet/baustin> and in person at 243 High St (Court House), Room 026 in downtown Morgantown.

### Members Present:

Christiaan Abildso (Chair), Bill Austin, Heather Britton, Chip Wamsley, Matthew Cross, and Thomas Zeni

**Others Present:** Jacqueline Peate, Jing Zhang

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### 1. Call to Order

The TTAC meeting was held virtually and in person. The phone number and web address to access the teleconference were publicized. With a quorum present, Mr. Abildso called the meeting of the CAC to order at 6:04 PM.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Mr. Cross moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Abildso; with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Agenda Item Name – TIP

Mr. Austin discussed the proposed TIP Amendments and Administrative changes to the MPO's TIP under the MPO's recently adopted policy. Administrative changes include bridge reconstruction and refurbishment. These changes came due to a new STIP being implemented. The proposed TIP Amendment is to program the Right of Way acquisition and construction of the Smithtown Road/US 119 intersection. The Right of Way Phase is \$100,000, with \$90,000 in Federal Funds. The Obligation Date is 4/28/2024. The Construction Phase has \$ \$1,080,000 in Federal Funds and \$1,200,000 in total funds. The Obligation Date is 6/28/2024.

Mr. Abildso asked about funding source and crash data. Mr. Austin clarified funding source. Mr. Abildso and Ms. Britton noted the lack of transportation near Smithtown Road/US 119. Mr. Austin said he would pass this along to Mountain Lion. Mr. Cross asked about University Avenue, and Mr. Austin clarified that it is a state road maintained by the city. Mr. Cross questioned does 'slab' means in TIP? Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO has requested further information from the DOH.

Mr. Cross moved to recommend the recommendation of the TIP Amendments and Adjustments to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Ms. Britton. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Agenda Item Name – Microsimulation Scope of Work

Mr. Austin noted that the next item was the scope of work for the Downtown Microsimulation Study for planning and traffic engineering services for the Morgantown Downtown Traffic Study. The purpose of the ‘Downtown Traffic Study’ is to recommend potential future reconfigurations of the downtown Morgantown transportation network based on a data driven process with additional input from the community and stakeholders. A draft of the Scope has been reviewed by the Study Steering Committee members. Kimley Horn has modified the Scope per those comments. This project is funded with \$400,000 of Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Funding. Part of MPO’s suballocation are these funds. \$100,000 of funding coming from Monongalia County, City of Morgantown, Morgantown Area Partnership, and WVU. Mr. Austin noted that Mr. Gatlin raised a concern about the language including pedestrian safety in the TTAC meeting. The language will be adjusted to address this. Data collection is projected to begin in October when students are back in town.

Mr. Cross noted that the Concert Series at the Waterfront area may increase traffic, suggested looking at this area. He additionally asked if the Kimley Horn will suggest Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPis). Mr. Austin said they were looking at signal optimization.

Mr. Abildso had a question about Task 1. Mentions one and two days of collection. Mr. Austin clarified that sites had been added for day 2. Mr. Abildso raised a concern about the Beechurst construction interfering with traffic collection data. The counts there may be messed up due to construction, and he was concerned about money being wasted. Mr. Austin noted there is available data from previous studies to aid in this, and some of the construction will be completed by the time the microsimulation is projected to begin. This concern will be passed along to Kimley Horn.

Mr. Zeni moved to recommend the recommendation of the Microsimulation Scope of Work to the MPO’s Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Cross. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Other Business

Mr. Abildso noted there have been updates on repaving and drainage on the Rail Trail, and that the Collins Ferry Connector will open 6/9/2023.

Mr. Cross noted that paving on Patterson Drive looks good. But he is concerned about two lanes creating a weaving issue. He suggested PR, possibly in the Dominion Post, to educate drivers about new crosswalk and how to be aware of pedestrians crossing. Mr. Austin said the Dominion Post would provide space for safety education, could be used to address this concern. Mr. Cross suggested a diagram.

Mr. Zeni commented about Sabrton Ave. and another street connected to the Mile Ground (City Streets). He noted there was an increase in traffic directed to these narrow streets, and people are not driving well/safely on them. Mr. Zeni raised concern about traffic safety with construction on Mile Ground Road. Mr. Austin noted this was a temporary situation.

Mr. Cross raised a concern about the long duration of the light at Mon Blvd and Patterson Dr. Mr. Austin noted he had correspondence with Charleston Traffic Operations, and they have identified a need to do a study at Mon Blvd and Patterson Dr.

Ms. Britton raised a concern about pedestrian issues at Maple Drive and Mon General. She takes the Purple Line (Mountain Lion) frequently, and the stop at Oasis Café is popular. There is a blind turn and

increase in speed from drivers, making it dangerous for pedestrians and those getting off at that bus stop. Mr. Austin said a traffic study at this intersection could help address this issue.

Mr. Austin noted the WRA Study for the Division of Highways on Pedestrians has been folded into the State's Highway Safety Program. He will be attending the meeting to kick off this Program next week. They have 7 emphasis areas, one being pedestrian safety. A plan will be provided for the MMMPO and this plan can begin to be implemented.

## **8. Meeting Adjournment**

The Meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM



## Memorandum

Date: August 2, 2023  
From: Bill Austin, AICP  
To: MPO Committee Members  
Subject: Proposed Southern Bridge

This memorandum is to inform the MMMPO's committees about a proposal from the WVDOH Division of Highways (WVDOH) for the construction of a new bridge across the Monongahela River in the vicinity of and to connect to the roadway network of the Morgantown Industrial Park (MIP). According to WVDOH, this proposed bridge would be constructed in addition to the Harmony Grove Interchange. The primary purpose of the bridge is to provide a new employer, Mountaintop Beverage with access to I-79 as quickly as possible. A map identifying the potential locations for this bridge as well as diagrams showing the potential traffic impacts of the alternatives are included with this memorandum.

### Background

The MMMPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes the construction of the Harmony Grove interchange to provide MIP with access to I-79. MPO Staff conducted a feasibility study to determine if this interchange should be included in the urban area's transportation plan in 2018. That Study also looked at alternatives to the interchange including construction of a bridge south of the Westover Bridge. The MTP includes this bridge but it has not been a priority for the MPO's Policy Board and was included in the "Funded by Others" category of the MTP.

WVDOH has been working with the owners of the MIP and Mountain Top Beverage to develop the Harmony Grove Interchange. This process has been slow due to a variety of factors including the need for approval of the interchange from the Federal Highway Administration. Due to the long time it has taken to develop the Interchange Justification Report (IJR), WVDOH has been concerned that the interchange cannot be constructed quickly enough to meet the needs of Mountain Top Beverage. Stating that they can construct a bridge faster than they can get approval for and construct the Harmony Grove Interchange, WVDOH proposed the construction of a new bridge and connecting roadway while keeping the Harmony Grove Interchange moving forward for eventual construction. WVDOH has had a preliminary design study performed to evaluate potential locations for the proposed bridge.

### Process

MPO staff respectfully recommends that the MPO's committee members consider the question of whether or not a new bridge should be considered in two parts:

- 1) Is there a need for a new bridge south of the existing Westover Bridge? Answering this question is key for determining whether or not the MTP priority list should be amended to include this project in a tier higher than

the “To be funded by others” category and a subsequent TIP Amendment. Staff recommends that the Policy Board consider the proposed land uses in the area from applicable Comprehensive Plan(s) and similar issues when looking at this question.

- 2) If the answer is yes to the first question, the MPO’s committees should consider recommending a potential general location for the proposed bridge. The Policy Board can only recommend a general location since the complex engineering study needed for the construction of the project may identify issues with any precise location that may be identified.

### **Bridge Alternatives**

WVDOH originally proposed three alternative bridge locations for consideration. **All three locations were estimated to be by WVDOH’s draft Study of the project to cost between \$64 million and \$71 million. At this level of study these costs are essentially the same for all alternatives.** A map showing the general locations of all three alternatives is attached. (Please note the maps are illustrative, final location would be determined through detailed study.) For the purposes of this preliminary evaluation all alternatives are proposed to be 40’ wide with 12’ lanes and 8 foot shoulders. Any constructed facility may differ slightly from this standard due to the requirements of the final design.

**-Alternative 1-**is a bridge crossing the Monongahela south of the Morgantown Lock on the Monongahela and north of the BFS gas station on Don Knotts Boulevard. This alternative would connect to River Road and include reconstruction of River Road.

**-Alternative 2-**This alternative would cross the Monongahela at Greenbag Road. **WVDOH and the MIP agreed to take this alternative off of the table due to the elevation of the proposed bridge and the impact to the MIP street network.** It is included in the attached documentation for informational purposes only.

**-Alternative 3-**This alternative would intersect with Don Knotts Blvd. north of Hazel’s House of Hope and connect to the southern portion of the MIP street network at Rail Street. This alternative would include an at grade intersection with Smithtown Road.

### **Traffic Impacts of the Alternatives**

MPO staff prepared a preliminary evaluation of Alternatives 1 and 3 using the MPO’s regional travel demand model. This analysis provides an order of magnitude estimation of each alternative’s impact to the surrounding roadway network. It should be noted that this model does not take into account any potential changes to land use spurred by the enhanced access provided by the new bridge. The model is consistent with the growth projections used for the Harmony Grove IJR. Please see the attached stick diagram traffic maps for the overall estimation of each bridges impact on the traffic network.

**Alternative 1:** A review of the projections indicates that Alternative 1 would have the greatest impact on downtown Morgantown’s street network. The proposed bridge at this location would divert traffic from the south seeking to use the existing Westover bridge. The model shows that traffic on Don Knotts Blvd. south of the existing bridge would grow significantly from the existing approximately 16,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to over 22,000 vpd. This is not a particular concern for the area since the existing cross section of the Boulevard in this segment has enough capacity to handle the increased traffic volume now and the volumes projected for 2050.

Of some concern is that this alternative would significantly increase traffic on Dupont Road. If this alternative were implemented today the model estimates that volumes would increase from about 1,200 vpd to 4,400 vpd. In 2050 the volumes would increase from 3,800 vpd in the no build scenario to 8,200 vpd in the build scenario.

It should also be noted that this proposed bridge is in the approximate location evaluated for a new bridge as part of the MPO's 2018 Morgantown Industrial Park Access Study. While neither the MPO in 2018 nor WVDOH now propose that any structure would take any property outside the existing Don Knotts Blvd. right of way the proposal to locate a bridge at this location did raise objections from the residents of the City of Morgantown's First Ward.

**-Alternative 3-**This alternative primarily benefits the residents of Monongalia County and Preston County south of Greenbag Road and the MIP. The model anticipates that the impact to Smithtown Road would be negligible. The model estimates a small impact on the Westover Bridge and the downtown Morgantown Street network.

### **Pros and Cons of Each Alternative**

WVDOH's feasibility study analyzed the "Pros and Cons" of each alternative. Below are the issues for Alternatives 1 and 3 identified by this Study. (Note staff has slightly modified the language from the report for readability-staff took all care not to change the meaning.)

#### **Alternative 1:**

##### **Pros-**

- Mitigates impact to River Road
- Potential to be constructed in phases
- Provides separation of industrial/through traffic and residential traffic
- Shorter and smaller bridge
- Improves school intersection and overall connectivity
- Provides best overall impact to the existing Bartolo Bridge
- Traffic and safety improvements with grade separated connection to US 119
- Grade separation aligns with 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan controlled access for US 119
- Potential to address White Park access (with pedestrian bridge)
- New roadway would meet MPO urban standard
- Turn lanes on bridge unlikely

##### **Cons-**

- Potential opposition from residents of First Ward
- Most earthwork
- Closest to Morgantown Lock
- Bridge construction more likely to interfere with channel navigation
- Most traffic control required during construction
- Two structures required
- Ramps for grade separation requires retaining walls
- Least direct connection for Mountain Top Beverage to I-68
- Approximately 8% slope on bridge
- Requires most redesign of adjacent intersections
- More geotechnical issues

#### **Alternative 3**

##### **Pros-**

- No structure takes required
- Alternative access to Smithtown Road avoids problematic intersection



Improved travel time to developments using Smithtown Road  
Most direct connection to I-68 for Mountaintop Beverage  
Suitable area on western side of river for bridge constructability

**Alternative 3 (continued)**

**Cons-**

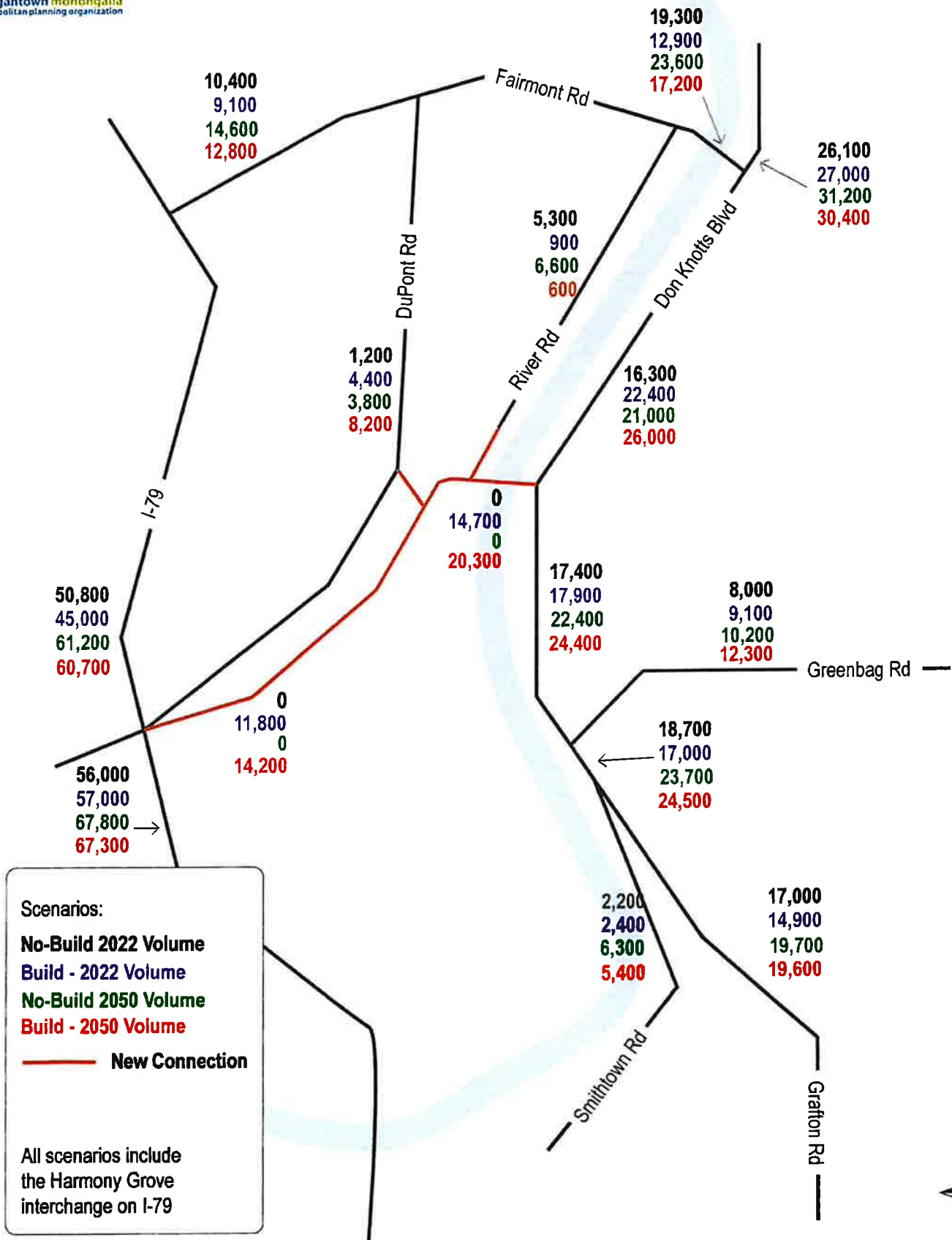
Adds at grade intersection for area MMMPO has identified for widening  
Limited benefits for local network beyond Smithtown Road  
Redundant with I-79 and I-68 after Harmony Grove Interchange is completed  
May require turn lanes on bridge  
Long and tall bridge  
Crossing FERC gas line  
Relies on using existing industrial park access roads  
Widen US 119 for turn lanes

**Conclusion**

This memorandum has sought to summarize information prepared by WVDOH's consultant's and MMMPO Staff concerning a proposed "southern bridge" in an accessible manner for the MMMPO's committees. It is respectfully requested that the MPO's Committees make a recommendation on this item to the Policy Board.



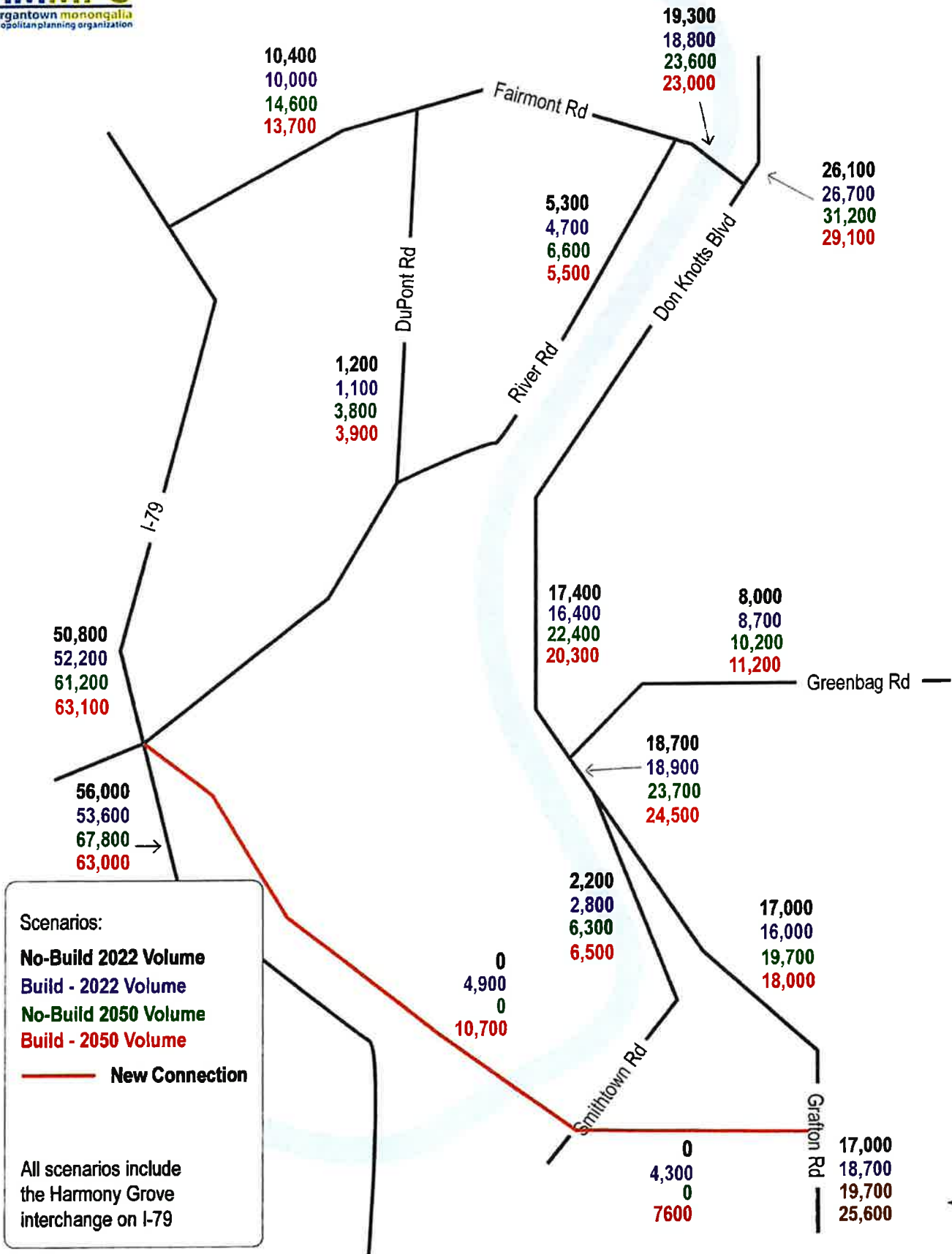
# Preliminary Bridge Evaluation Summary - ALT 1



Not drawn to scale



# Preliminary Bridge Evaluation Summary - ALT 3



Not drawn to scale



### WVGES All Mining Map

