

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD

OCTOBER 16, 2014 MINUTES

Members Present: Chairman Anthony Giambrone-Star City, Mayor Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Vice Chairman Wes Nugent-City of Morgantown, Rob Moyer-WVU, Councilperson Marti Shamberger-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Brian Carr-WV DOH. Councilperson Janice Goodwin-Westover, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Commissioner Eden Callen-Monongalia County, Joe Statler-Blacksville

MPO Director: Bill Austin

Members Absent: Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Randy Hudak-WVU

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Giambrone called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Chairman Giambrone noted that Mr. Rob Moyer is to represent WVU in this meeting.

II. Public Comment

None

III. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Giambrone introduced the approval of the Minutes for the August Meeting. Councilperson Shamberger moved to accept the August Policy Board minutes as submitted; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

IV. Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Rice, Chair of the CAC, reported that two members from WV DOH attended the last CAC meeting and provided valuable information on major ongoing transportation projects underway in the Morgantown area. Mr. Rice appreciated this effort and suggested that it take place once or twice a year.

Mr. Rice then noted that the CAC recommended approval of the submitted TIP Amendments. He also noted that the public meeting for Greenbag Rd corridor planning study was fruitful. He then encouraged the MPO, County, City, and Chamber of Commerce to work together to generate a united voice for transportation improvements in this community.

b. Financial Report

Chairman Giambrone asked Mayor Lewis to present the finance report. Mayor Lewis presented the MPO's activities as follows:

-Beginning balance in August \$24,704.83 with expenditures of \$23,306.87 and two deposits totaling \$15,875.14, leaving a balance of \$17,273.10 at the beginning of September. Beginning balance in September \$17,273.10 with expenditures of \$14,794.05 with deposits there was a balance of \$3,279.05 at the beginning of October. Vice Chairman Nugent moved to accept the financial report as presented; seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. WVDOH Project Status Report

Mr. Carr updated the Board on the status of major ongoing TIP projects in the Morgantown area:

1) the University and Collins Ferry Intersection Project is in the preliminary design stage. Field review and right-of-way assessment have been completed and the budget for this project has been adjusted from \$600,000 to \$3,000,000, based on new findings;

2) the Mileground Reconstruction Project from Donna Ave to Cheat Rd has cleared the environmental impact studies and construction will begin in summer of 2015. The street cross section will be four 11' lanes with 2' paved shoulder on each side. No roundabout at the Cheat Rd intersection. The middle section of this project, which is from WV 705 to Donna Ave, is the environmental impact study process and information on the planned roadway design is not available at this stage;

3) Van Voorhis Rd Improvement will include wide shoulders as well as solve the drainage issues on that road section;

4) Progress has been made on the Monongahela Blvd Center Turn Lane Project from Star City Bridge to WV 705. A number of entities have been involved and contributed to this project, including WVU, MPO, WVDOH, City of Morgantown, and Monongalia County. A bicycle climbing lane is being considered in this project;

5) The traffic study for the Greenbag Rd and WV 7 intersection improvement has been finished. The report will be released soon. The next phase of this project is to explore alternatives to improve that intersection. WV DOH has also initiated a traffic study at the intersection of Greenbag Rd and CR 73. Traffic data is to be collected in the spring of 2015;

6) The I-79 interchange project, developers are working with consulting firms on site plans. The interchange is expected to open to traffic in June 2016 and the Ballpark is to open to public in May 2015.

Commissioner Bloom asked about the status of design on the intersection Mileground Rd and Airport Blvd. Mr. Carr noted that no definitive design decision has been made at that intersection. He pointed out that the project team has given priority to the section between Donna Ave and Eastern Hill, while other parts of the project are moving at a slower pace. Mayor Selin asked how property and right-of-way issues will be addressed once an improvement plan is adopted. Mr. Austin noted that emergency acquisition process can be triggered as needed. Mr. Carr noted the scope of right-of-way acquisition is difficult to predict when environmental process is in the process. Commissioner Callen suggested that local knowledge play a role in the decision-making process when decisions are made by engineering staff in Charleston.

V. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Austin noted that without a quorum, the last TTAC meeting made no formal recommendation. The absence was partly due to the rescheduling of the meeting date, as the result of a schedule conflict with the WVDOH/MPO/FHWA annual meeting. Mr. Austin then thanked Mr. Penn for his effort in supporting the WV MPO association.

a. I-79 Access Study Status Report

Mr. Austin noted that the Mountain Line has agreed to pay the local match for the I-79 Access Study. The study will focus on identify additional access from Morgantown Downtown and WV 705 corridor to I-79.

b. Greenbag Road Study status Report

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff has been diligently working on the Greenbag Rd Corridor Planning Study, including collecting and analyzing traffic data, identifying capacity and geographical deficiency, and hosting public meetings. Mr. Austin also noted that an effort will be made to reach the local truck industry to capture their input on needed improvements to Greenbag Rd.

Commissioner Bloom noted that it is prudent to clarify that the Greenbag Rd study is not motivated by the Morgantown downtown truck issue. Mr. Austin added that the Greenbag road study was originally recommended in the 2013-2040 LRTP and programmed into MPO's FY2014-2015 UPWP in October 2013. Commissioner Callen noted that during the public meeting of Greenbag Rd Study, participants were actively involved. He encouraged continued efforts to improve Greenbag Rd by inviting stakeholders from local truck industry to the planning process. Mr. Austin then asked if the Board felt the need to schedule a retreat to provide input into the development of the MPO's work program for the next fiscal year. Mayor Selin concurred with Commissioner Callen's opinion on the Greenbag Road study. She then noted that providing the operational status of MPO, there is no urgent need to hold a policy board retreat at this moment.

VI. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment and Adjustments

Mr. Austin noted that Mountain Line Transit has requested three TIP Amendments as part of filing applications for grants from the Federal Transit Administration. He introduced the grant applications for a storage facility, multi-modal parking facility, and bus purchase. Commissioner Callen moved to approve the requested TIP as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Austin then introduced five TIP Amendments requested by the DOH as described in the memorandum included in the agenda package of this meeting. Commissioner Callen noted that the effectiveness of thin oil overlay should be evaluated and suggested that WVDOH consider using other available technologies to extend the project life and improve project quality. Mr. Carr noted that the decision of choosing a road pavement technology was balanced on safety concern and economic feasibility. He noted that the thin oil overlay may cover more miles with same amount of funds available at the time. Commissioner Callen moved to approve the requested TIP amendments as presented; seconded by Vice Chairman Nugent. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Austin then introduced three TIP Administrative Adjustments as described in the memorandum in the agenda package. The adjustment require no recommendation from the Policy Board.

VII. University Avenue Complete Streets Study RFQ

Mr. Austin noted that the Request for Qualification on University Avenue Complete Streets Study has been included in the agenda package. The study is to identify potential street improvements in the University Ave Corridor from Beechurst Avenue to WV 705. The improvement is recommended in the MPO's LRTP and has become more important with ongoing development in the Sunnyside-Up Tax Increment Financing District. It is anticipated that the match needed for a TIGER grant would come from the Sunnyside-Up TIP District and WVU's redevelopment funds. Mr. Austin thanked Mr. Moyer for his works in developing the funding mechanism for the improvements in the Sunnyside-Up area. He also noted that a potential second phase of this project may focus on University Ave between Boyers Ave and WV 705. Commissioner Bloom noted that it is important to include some key intersections on Beechurst Ave in this study. Mr. Austin noted that the intersection of Beechurst Ave and Campus Dr has been identified as one of the secondary impact areas and will be studied. Ron Justice introduced the historical context of transportation improvements on University Ave and emphasized the importance of this study. Mr. Austin then added that this will be a study aiming for a holistic improvement of University Ave including safety improvements, traffic operations, and pedestrian and cycling facility improvements and that a selection committee will be formed. Mr. Moyer noted that this study provides a unique opportunity to improve the traffic condition for the entire corridor of University Ave. Mr. Kelly moved to an approval of releasing the Request of Qualification of this study; seconded by Mayor Selin. The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. Bylaws Committee Recommendations

Commissioner Bloom introduced recommended changes to the Bylaws as described in the memorandum sent to the MPO Policy Board by the Bylaws Committee on September 22, 2014. These include five changes to the MPO's Bylaws and one change to the way the Policy Board addresses a personnel issue. It also include two issues that the Bylaws Committee submitted to the Policy Board for discussion.

Councilperson Shamberger noted that she is not comfortable with the proposed change that provides quorum requirement to 50% of the voting members rather than 50% and one voting members. Commissioner Bloom noted that the intention of this change is to guarantee the presence of six voting members when a formal decision is made by the Policy Board. Vice Chairman Nugent suggested to amend this item as 50% plus one voting member, or six member, whichever number is greater. Commissioner Bloom moved to an approval of changes recommended by the Bylaws Committee; seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Bloom then suggested the Board consider 1) linking MPO Policy Board voting to the size of the jurisdiction and 2) the idea that only elected officials should be allowed voting privileges on the Policy Board. Commissioner Callen introduced the historical context of population representation in Monongalia County and noted that distributing of voting power based on population reflects the purpose of the MPO. Mayor Selin noted that the Board should focus on transportation improvements, that the Board should not exclude other agencies, and that the bylaw issue should not be a dominant part of the discussion. Mr. Justice noted that equal voting power is essential to bring stakeholders to the table and to generate meaningful interactions. Mr. Kelly noted that the purpose of the MPO is served, as long as the majority in the Policy Board is made up of elected officials in the area. Mr. Austin was asked to solicit comments from the Policy Board on this issue and to summarize them for the Board before the next meeting. Any proposed changes would be developed from these comments prior to the next meeting. Members of the Board noted that the next policy board meeting date is a WVU football game day and rescheduled the next Policy Board meeting on December 4th.

IX. Consideration of whether or not the MPO wishes to make known a position on City of Morgantown Truck Issue

Mr. Austin noted that the 2013-2040 LRTP Plan took no position on the issue of prohibiting truck traffic in the Morgantown downtown area, and that in the August meeting, the Board decided to consider whether or not the MPO wishes to make known a position on City of Morgantown Truck Issue at this meeting. Commissioner Callen moved to take no position on the City of Morgantown Truck Issue and remove this issue from the MPO agenda; seconded by Councilperson Goodwin. Upon discussion Councilperson Goodwin withdrew her second and Commissioner Callen withdrew his motion. No action was taken on the item.

X. Other Business

Commissioner Callen informed the Board that he is to attend a hearing to be held by the Infrastructure in the Transportation Committee at the WV Senate. This hearing is associated with a local bill initiated by the Transportation Committee of the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce. The suggested legislation focuses on developing transportation project and local funding mechanism.

XI. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.