



## POLICY BOARD MEETING

City of Morgantown  
389 Spruce Street  
Morgantown, WV  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 6 PM

### Members Present:

Chairman Joe Statler – Blacksville, Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Steve Blinco – Star City, Bill Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Brian Carr – WVDOH, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Maria Smith – Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mayor Patricia Lewis - Town of Granville, Joe AbuGhannam - City of Morgantown, Russ Rogerson - Morgantown Area Partnership

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

**MPO Director:** Bill Austin, AICP

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### 1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Statler called the meeting of the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) Policy Board to order at 6:02 PM.

### 2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Justice moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the minutes passed unanimously.

### 4. Committee Reports

#### *a. Citizens Advisory Committee*

Mr. Austin provided the report. He stated that there was a full quorum at the last CAC meeting, and they recommended approval of the TIP Amendments. There is a new member, Wallace Venable.

#### *b. Finance*

Mayor Lewis noted that the beginning balance in March was higher than the report in February due to two voided checks that were lost in the mail.

The beginning balance in March was \$93,918.71, there were deposits totaling \$54,419.51, eighteen disbursements totaling \$47,224.96, leaving the ending balance at \$101,113.26. This carried over into April. There were two deposits in April, totaling \$40,751.32, nineteen disbursements totaling \$35,242.62, leaving a balance of \$106,621.96.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the Financial Report; seconded by Mr. Kawecki. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

*c. Executive Director*

Mr. Austin stated there have been three checks that have gone missing in the mail, and they will be looking into it. He also reported the Steering Committee for the Microsimulation Study met earlier in the month and had a productive meeting. The consultants explained the data and computer model so everyone understood the simulation. At the end of June, they will meet again to discuss options they would like to see. The consultants will be preparing a survey for the downtown business community and public. He also reported that MPO staff will be out of office Tuesday through Thursday for the WVAMPO Conference.

Chairman Statler reiterated that the Policy Board has quorum.

**6. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments**

The West Virginia Department of Transportation has requested the following TIP Amendment. Administrative Adjustments are also shown below:

Funding Change

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD (AUTH AC). FFY 2024. Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction Phase. Federal funds reduced from \$57,600,000 to \$20,000,000  
Total Cost \$72,000,000

STAR CITY I/C IMPROVEMENT. FFY 2029 Federal ID: NHPP0079156D. Construction Phase. ACTION: Federal funds increased from \$0 to \$59,400,000. Total Cost \$66,000,000

Add New Projects

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD (AC PAYBACK). FFY 2025. Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction Phase. Federal funds: \$10,000,000

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD (AC PAYBACK). FFY 2026. Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction Phase. Federal funds: \$10,000,000

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD (AC PAYBACK). FFY 2027. Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction Phase. Federal funds: \$10,000,000

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD (AC PAYBACK). FFY 2029. Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction Phase. Federal funds: \$7,600,000.

Administrative adjustments

BROCKWAY AVE. Federal ID: STP0007305D. FYY 2024. Construction Phase. Increase Federal funds from \$640,000 to \$800,000; total funds from \$1,680,000 to \$2,100,000

UNIVERSITY AVE BRIDGE. Federal ID: HWI0119547D. FYY 2024. Construction Phase.  
ACTION: Total funds from \$500,000 to \$900,000. Federal funds from \$ 400,00 to \$720,000

The proposed amendments to the Morgantown Industrial Park project are apparently to restructure how the project funding is spread between fiscal years. The proposed amendment to the Star City Interchange project restructures the project to Federal funding rather than GO BOND funding. The TTAC and CAC have both reviewed the proposed amendments and recommended approval by the Policy Board.

Charman Statler stated he would like more information on the Star City TIP Amendment listed in the agenda. He suggested to appoint an informational committee to meet with the state about this project on Exit 155. Chairman Statler would like to vote on the Morgantown Industrial Park Access Road project, but would also like to discuss this with the informational committee. Mr. Justice stated he agrees with this decision. Chairman Statler appointed himself, Sean Sikora, Ron Justice, Russ Rogerson, Bill Austin, and Steve Blinco. He expects to receive more information that he will pass along to the Policy Board. Mr. Austin said he has individuals in mind who would be appropriate to bring to the table.

Mr. Carr noted that the funding source has simply changed and it will not be affecting the project. This TIP Amendment is shuffling around federal dollars and utilizing state funding. He stated funding is shifted constantly at the WVDOT, but this will not change the course of the project. He emphasized the importance of passing this TIP Amendment.

Mr. Justice stated that this change is why they want to table the Amendment and have an information committee. He wants to make sure the state funds are being used appropriately, especially those that were promised to the Monongalia area.

Mr. Austin stated there should be a motion to table the Star City TIP Amendment until the next meeting. Mr. Justice moved to table this item; seconded by Commissioner Bloom.

Commissioner Sikora asked if the funding being moved was for FY 29. He asked for clarification on the funding change and if the funding is constrained for FY 29. Mr. Carr reiterated that money is constantly moved around to make sure money is spent on time so projects can be completed. Commissioner Sikora said he understands how the money awarded can be used for this project. Money is guaranteed, but is shifted around.

The motion passed with one vote against, Brian Carr.

Mr. Justice moved to pass the Morgantown Industrial Park Access Road project TIP Amendments; seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. Update on Community Garden Program**

Mr. Austin stated that the Community Garden Project received four applications for funding. The Project Selection Committee consisting of Andrew Gast-Bray-Monongalia County, Rickie Yeager-City of Morgantown, Katherine Millette-City of Morgantown and Bill Austin-MMMPO reviewed the applications and selected the following applications for full funding:

- The West Virginia Gardening Collaborative-This group works with the City of Westover. The proposed location for the garden is in Westover City Park-Requested amount-\$4,590.
- Scott's Run Settlement House-This established group seeks to start a community garden at their new location. Requested amount-\$5,000.
- Chris White's Community Garden-Mr. White has previously established a community garden on his own property at his Madsville address. Mr. White proposes to use this funding to expand his garden and to install fencing to protect the community garden from wildlife. He also has put in plan to seek out additional participants in his community garden including outreach to various groups such as The Shack and Scott's Run Settlement house. He also operates online chat group for community garden volunteers. He has recently secured some funding through the NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program, and applied for funding through the Monongahela Conservation District to secure additional funding for future garden expansions. He included letters of recommendation from the Mon Valley Green Space Coalition and a representative of the State's Natural Resource Council. Requested amount-\$5,000.

In addition to the applications noted above the MPO received an application from a private citizen to host an orchard on his property. The Selection Committee did not recommend funding this application. A summary of all of the applications submitted is included as an attachment to the Policy Board Agenda. MPO Staff is finalizing arrangements to receive the Community Garden funding from WVDOH. He stated that we anticipate that this funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis which will require agencies to provide receipts which will be reimbursed on a 100% basis.

Commissioner Bloom raised concern that Scott's Run Settlement House is moving to Cheat Lake, and this is not necessarily a community in need currently. Chairman Statler stated that the old location of Scott's Run was a difficult place to have a successful community garden, and the new location will have more space and availability for a community garden. He thanked the MPO and State for putting this project together.

Mr. Austin stated that applicants have a reporting requirement as stated in the application.

## **8. Update on Downtown Microsimulations Study**

Mr. Austin provided this update as part of his Executive Director Report.

## **9. Draft Electric Charging Station Study**

Mr. Austin stated that this document provides a comprehensive overview of electric vehicles in the context of Monongalia County, offering insights into crucial aspects of the implementation of this technology. The background section covers essential topics such as EV education, charging infrastructure, strategic location selections, and federal standards. Serving as an informative foundation, this document is a valuable resource for those seeking a holistic understanding of EVs. The analysis segment delves into the current status of EVs and charging ports in Monongalia County, presenting data on existing infrastructure while forecasting future needs. Additionally, it identifies potential locations for new charging ports to meet the rising demand for electric mobility. In a commitment to inclusive planning, the document underscores the incorporation of public input, positioning it as a collaborative resource for ongoing research or project development within the Monongalia County Metropolitan Planning Organization

(MMMPO). The appendix includes funding opportunities for rural and urban charging stations for MPOs and Localities. Staff will be putting this document out for public input and hosting a public open house. This is currently an informational item, and staff is looking for feedback from Policy Board members. This document has been reviewed and recommended by the TTAC and CAC.

Mr. Blinco asked about responsibilities of entities if or when they get the grant. Mr. Austin stated that the responsibilities listed will be required to be met if the grant is awarded.

#### **10. Other Business**

Chairman Statler stated that if a Policy Board member has a question about the Star City exit to relay it to Mr. Austin and he will present it when the informational committee meets.

Commissioner Bloom clarified that this will be tabled until the June meeting. Mr. Kelly requested that Mr. Blinco communicate with Mayor Lewis as this exit is in her jurisdiction. The Policy Board will be updated with what occurred in this meeting in June. Ms. Smith asked who Mr. Austin will be reaching out to, and he stated it will be individuals at the Deputy Secretary level.

#### **11. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.