



CITIZENS ADVISORY MEETING

November 10, 2022

This meeting was held virtually at
<https://morgantownmonongaliampo.my.webex.com/meet/baustin>

Members Present:

Christiaan Abildso (Chair), Chip Wamsley, Tom Zeni, Kelli LaNeve, Heather Morgan, Matt Cross, Ed Sneckenberger

Others Present: Jing Zhang

1. Call to Order

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAC meeting was held virtually. 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 6:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Ms. Morgan noted that there was a typo in her name. Mr. Cross moved to approve the meeting minutes as corrected; seconded by Mr. Wamsley; with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. TIP Amendments

Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO has been awarded a Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to complete the design of the improvements identified in the MPO's Study of Greenbag Road and to study the feasibility of constructing a multi-purpose path parallel to Greenbag Road. The FHWA awarded the MMMPO the full \$4.2 million requested for this project. A copy of the letter confirming this award is included with the agenda packet.

Mr. Austin noted that a discussion with WV DOH is underway to decide if the MPO will be the direct recipient of this grant or if WV DOH will take the lead in administering the grant.

Mr. Cross asked about the timeline for the study. Mr. Austin noted the MPO will need to program this project before working out the details with a consultant. The grant requires that the funding be obligated by 2026. The MPO hopes to get it done much earlier than the deadline.

Mr. Sneckenberger how the funding was awarded to MPO. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO got the grant through a RAISE grant application that MPO applied for Greenbag Rd in April.

Mr. Abildso suggested that the WV DOH's district office should be involved in the design while the MPO should take the lead in the process.

Mr. Sneckenberger moved to recommend the TIP amendment to the MPO's Policy Board, seconded by Mr. Wamsley. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Highway Safety Performance Measures

Mr. Austin noted that included in the agenda package is a memorandum identifying the West Virginia Department of Transportation's progress toward meeting their safety goals and the safety goals they are proposing for the upcoming year. The MPO is required to annually adopt Highway Safety Performance Measures to track progress toward achieving safety goals for Congress.

Mr. Cross asked about any incentives to achieve the goal. Mr. Austin noted that failing to archive the goal will result in a mandatory change in the DOH's funding mechanism to address the performance deficiency. Mr. Cross noted that he hopes to see more efforts in enforcement in improving highway safety. Mr. Zeni agreed and noted that while the traffic volume has been declining due to the impact of COVID-19, there are noticeable safety issues and a lack of enforcement on the roads in the area. There should be more joint effort between the WV DOH and law enforcement. Mr. Austin agreed and noted that engineering, education, and enforcement are important elements in improving traffic safety.

Mr. Abildso suggested the MPO track the number of crashes, besides tracking the fatality and several injuries as the result of crashes. Mr. Austin agreed and noted that the MPO staff can evaluate the crash data from the WV DOH and prepare a report on the finding. The task can be included in the MPO's UPWP. Mr. Cross noted that the city has the challenge of obtaining precise crash locations. Mr. Wamsley noted that the Bicycle Board did an evaluation of bicycle crash data years ago and found that bicycle-related crashes were under reported. Mr. Cross moved to recommend approval of the safety performance measures to the MPO's Policy Board, seconded by Mr. Zeni. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Draft FY 2023 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Austin noted that a draft meeting schedule for 2023 has been included in the agenda package. The schedule is being presented to the committee to identify any potential conflicts. If there are any conflicts, the MPO will adjust the schedule accordingly.

Mr. Cross moved to recommend approval of the 2023 meeting calendar as presented; Seconded by Mr. Abildso. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Draft Process for evaluating proposed projects for Carbon Reduction and Surface Transportation Block Grant Funding

Mr. Austin noted that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides for MPOs under 200,000 in population to potentially have the authority to allocate funding from the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). The MPO staff prepared two memorandums on this topic. One memorandum identifies types of projects that can be funded through these programs and the percentage of the project cost that would be eligible through the programs. The second memorandum outlines a draft proposal review process for applicants who apply to the MPO for funding.

The Committee discussed the potential projects that might be eligible for the grant.

Mr. Abildso moved to recommend approval of the project evaluation process to the MPO's Policy Board, seconded by Mrs. Morgan. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Input on projects to be included in the FY 2023-2024 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff is developing the MPO's work program for the upcoming year. One item the MPO is considering is a detailed traffic modeling study for downtown Morgantown as identified in the recently adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). As noted in the MTP issues to be addressed in this study include the evaluation of alternatives for Grumbein's Island, downtown traffic operations including an evaluation of street pairs as well as the operation of the Don Knott's Boulevard on the Waterfront and Willey Street.

Mr. Austin noted that the UPWP can include items such as the development of a small area plan, working to coordinate efforts between various agencies and similar efforts, or the conduct of large studies using consultants. Mr. Austin welcomed the committee's input on the UPWP.

Mr. Abildso suggested conducting a literature review on the application of pedestrian leading intervals in a downtown environment similar to downtown Morgantown.

Mr. Cross expressed his appreciation to the MPO and WV DOH for setting the right-turn-on-red restrictions on High Street to Walnut St. Mr. Cross noted that the intersection of Patteson Dr and Morrill Way is a good location to test the use of a leading pedestrian interval signal.

Ms. Morgan noted that she expects improvements on the sidewalk and ADA compliance on Spruce and Willey Street and that she will be glad to provide input to the downtown traffic study.

Mr. Austin noted that the downtown traffic study has been a high priority for MPO as it will provide important information for developing the Tax Increment Financing (TIP) on Willey Street.

9. Other Business

Mr. Austin noted that he has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Associations (AMPA).

Mr. Austin noted that Jessica Moberly left the MPO. The MPO is considering two qualified candidates to fill Jessica's position.

Mr. Abildso noted that the Collins Ferry connector to the Mon Trail will be completed in early spring. He also noted that the Mon Trail Conservancy raised about \$50,000 in a recent fundraising event.

Mr. Cross expressed his appreciation to the MPO and WV DOH for the timely installation of crosswalks on Beechurst Ave at the Hough St intersection.

Mr. Zeni noted that there has been increased pedestrian crossing activity on Beechurst Ave in the Business and Economics building area. There are safety concerns about the crossing of pedestrians and vehicles accessing the parking lots at the riverfront side of Beechurst Ave. Mr. Austin noted that the city is working on a parallel project to standardize the intersection of 1st St and Beechurst Ave and to channel the traffic from/to the parking lots to that signalized intersection.

10. Meeting Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM