



CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 10th, 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 (Chairman), Bill Austin, Heather Morgan, Chip Wamsley, Matthew Cross, and Thomas Zeni

Others Present: Jacqueline Peate, Jing Zhang, Wallace Venable

1. Call to Order

The CAC 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 6:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Mr. Wamsley pointed out that it was called TTAC meeting instead of CAC meeting. Ms. Morgan noted her name change. Ms. Morgan moved to approve the meeting minutes as edited; seconded by Mr. Wamsley; with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Mr. Austin noted that 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.

Mr. Cross moved to recommend the Transportation Program Amendment; seconded by Mr. Zeni. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment

Mr. Austin informed the CAC 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. The DOH provided three (3) alternatives, which was narrowed down to two (2), provided in the agenda packet. DOH wants MPO to adjust MTP project list, moving the proposed southern bridge to Tier 2. This item has been dually advertised. The MMMPO has received feedback from the public, which has been presented to Advisory Committees and will be provided to the Policy Board.

Mr. Austin notes alternative 3 could be used as an emergency route, and clarified numbers on alternatives consider traffic as if Harmony Groove was built. DOH is not lessening effort for Harmony Groove.

Mr. Zeni asked if alternative 3 will reduce traffic in downtown corridor. Mr. Austin clarified it is too far south to significantly affect downtown traffic.

Ms. Morgan asked for clarification on why the TTAC did not make a recommendation on an alternative. Mr. Austin stated that they wanted a more in depth understanding of the environmental impact, and more information in general. The bridge will have to go through an environmental review. Mr. Austin reminded the CAC of how quickly Exit 153 on I-79 was constructed.

Mr. Cross asked about how many trucks are in Mountain Tops fleet, Mr. Austin said they use private contractors. WVDOH will be responsible for maintaining roads within the Industrial Park.

Mr. Abildso asked about updates on Harmony Groove. Mr. Austin said they are moving forward, but consultant was using incorrect traffic data for justification. This has been addressed and they are continuing to move on. Mr. Abildso asked that funding would change if southern bridge is moved to Tier 2. Mr. Austin said yes.

Mr. Cross asked if this new southern bridge would help increase businesses within the Industrial Park. Mr. Austin said yes. Mr. Cross asked about the Rail Trail letter. Mr. Austin said the letter has been received and will be passed along to the Policy Board. The Mon River Rail Trail Conservancy is concerned about rail closure and noise pollution. They also raised concern about landslides in the area where alternative 3 would place the bridge.

Mr. Abildso helped clarify that this is a TIF district, meaning it will not pay taxes to the public. The funds will be used to provide infrastructure. Mr. Austin did clarify the benefit would be in creating jobs for the area.

Mr. Abildso question about the estimated cost. Mr. Austin noted engineering, design, and cost are subject to change as this project is still in the preliminary planning process.

Mr. Cross asked about the intersection, if it will be a diamond. Mr. Abildso clarified it is an at grade intersection.

Mr. Cross moved to recommend moving the southern bridge to Tier 2; seconded by Mr. Zeni. The motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Abildso voting against.

Mr. Cross moved to recommend recommending alternative 3; seconded by Mr. Wamsley. The motion passed with Mr. Abildso abstaining.

5. Status of Suballocated Funds Project Applications

Mr. Austin provide an update of the suballocated funds. He has heard some questions and interest from the City of Morgantown, but that is all. The deadline is coming up, and he encouraged entities to apply. MPO Staff will re-send out application to qualifying agencies.

6. Other Business

Mr. Cross wanted to thank DOH for new pedestrian crossing at Patteson drive, and asked for update on the Patteson drive intersection lighting. Mr. Austin said he has reached out to DOH, but not heard a response.

Mr. Abildso asked if Willey St will be under construction all semester, and Mr. Austin mentioned construction is moving along well.

Mr. Austin mentioned the VRU meeting and survey WVDOH is preparing.

Ms. Morgan asked for an update on the pedestrian data collection on Maple Dr. and 704. Mr. Ausitn clarified that we have reached out to Mountain Line and staff is waiting on data.

7. Meeting Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM