

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
MAY 19, 2016 MINUTES

Members Present:

Chairman Eldon Callen-Monongalia County, Vice Chairman Mayor Herman Reid-Star City, Mayor Marti Shamberger-City of Morgantown, Councilperson Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Brian Carr-WVDOH, , Councilperson Wesley Nugent-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover

Members Absent: Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Randy Hudak-WVU, Delegate Joe Statler-Blacksville

MPO Director: Bill Austin

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Callen called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Public Comment

Darren Wilts, a resident of the Sunnyside neighborhood, expressed his concerns on the proposed changes on Beverly Ave. He noted that it is questionable to install a two-way bicycle lane on Beverly Ave. The street is in mountainous terrain and very few bicyclists will use that facility. The bike lane will not be a cost effective improvement. He then noted that converting Beverly Ave into a one-way street may induce a higher motor vehicle speed, making the street less safe for other users. He also questioned the justification of the five-leg intersection of Beverly Ave and University Ave. He pointed out that a fire truck, as he observed, was not able to make a turn between University Ave and 3rd St. Mr. Wilts requested to review pertinent analysis on that intersection, including turning templates and level of service information. Mr. Austin noted that the City of Morgantown controls the intersection and possesses the pertinent information requested. Mr. Wilts asked Mr. Carr if WV DOH approved the intersection modification project.

Mr. Carr noted that the Beverly Ave/University Ave intersection is not under the WV DOH jurisdiction. The recent changes made in that intersection area were developed by the City of Morgantown in collaboration with the Sunnyside TIF District.

Mr. Austin noted that the proposed improvement at the Beverly Ave and University Ave intersection by the University Ave Complete Street Study is not conclusive. It will be reviewed and evaluated by the City of Morgantown as one recommended alternative. It does not dictate its final design or preclude other alternatives for consideration. Mr. Austin then noted that Beverly Ave has been identified as a viable bicycle routes by the bicycle community and providing bicycle facilities in the University Ave corridor is

consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and the bicycle plan of the City of Morgantown.

Jim Craig, a resident of the Sunnyside neighborhood, expressed his concern on the proposed bicycle facilities on Beverly Ave. He noted that he has rarely seen any bicyclists traveling on Beverly Ave and bicyclists represent only a small fraction of the population in the Morgantown area. He noted that most residents in the Sunnyside area walk and use transit, instead of riding bicycles. It is hardly justifiable to invest limited public resources to build bicycle lanes on Beverly Ave. Mr. Craig noted that he has communicated with the City's Engineer Department and the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association. Neither party claim the responsibility for the current situation at the intersection of Beverly Ave and University Ave. Mr. Craig then asked why traffic analysis on that intersection was not provided in the Study Report. Mr. Austin noted that during the study period, the intersection was scheduled to be reconstructed and the current status of the intersection occurs after the analysis was completed. So, the study team did not include that intersection in the corridor traffic analysis of the study.

James Craig, a resident of the Sunnyside neighborhood, asked if any level of service analysis was conducted at the intersection the Beverly Ave and University Ave before the reconstruction of that intersection. He noted that the city engineer should have been aware that converting the intersection to a five-leg intersection would create a dangerous situation at that location.

Chairman Callen noted that the intersection is under the City's jurisdiction and the MPO mainly focus on the roads controlled by the State. He then noted that the MPO welcome community inputs on various traffic issues.

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Callen introduced the approval of the Minutes for the March Meeting. Mayor Shamberger moved approval of the minutes; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

6. Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Bill Rice, the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, welcomed comments made in the Public Comments session. Mr. Rice noted that the CAC recommended approval of the May TIP Amendments. He then noted that the CAC recommended, but not unanimously, to adopt the University Ave Complete Street Study. The CAC unanimously recommended adoption of the Westover-Granville Pedestrian study. He thanked MPO staff for conducting the pedestrian study. Mr. Rice then noted that the CAC recommended approval of the draft Title VI plan.

Councilperson Selin asked about the discussion in the CAC meeting regarding the TIP project proposed to be deleted. Mr. Rice noted that the committee was informed that the project was no longer viable regarding its cost-effectiveness under current situation.

Councilperson Nugent asked about the CAC's discussion on the University Complete Street Ave Study Report. Mr. Rice noted that a committee member was not comfortable that Burroughs St, a neighborhood street, was included in the traffic analysis of the study. Mr. Austin noted that the purpose of including

Burroughs St in the traffic analysis is only to assess the transportation system performance in a larger area. No project recommendation was made on that street. The consultant dropped Burroughs St from the traffic analysis map after the CAC meeting.

Mr. Rice then noted that the committee needs to clarify if the Study recommend a bicycle climbing lane on University Ave from Oakland St to Riverview Dr. Mr. Austin noted that the consultant has identified that installing a bicycle climbing lane at that segment was not cost-effective. The consultant recommended to install sharrows at that segment, which is consistent with the City of Morgantown Bicycle Plan. Chairman Callen asked if there is any request from the CAC that the plan be revised to address those concerns. Mr. Rice noted that there is none. Chairman Callen then asked about the attendance status of the CAC and if there is any vacant seat. Mr. Rice noted that the committee has high attendance rate in last few months and is a complete functioning body. Mr. Austin noted that the CAC currently has two vacant seats; one is for Westover and the other is for Monongalia County.

b. Finance Report

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

-- Beginning balance in March \$1945.59 with expenditures of \$35,966.58 and two deposits of \$64,304.39, leaving a balance of \$30,283.20 at the beginning of April.

-- Beginning balance in April \$30,283.20 with expenditures of \$36,420.37 and deposits totaling \$27,955.30, leaving a balance of \$21,818.13 at the beginning of May.

Mr. Kelly moved to accept the January and February Finance Report; seconded by Mayor Shamberger. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Austin noted that the University Ave Complete Street Study and the Westover-Granville Pedestrian Study are completed. The reports from both studies are presented to the Policy Board for review. Mr. Austin then noted that the I-79 Access Study is undergoing technique reviews based on the outputs from the travel demand model.

5. TIP Amendments

Mr. Austin noted that WV DOH proposed to delete the WV 705 Patteson Drive +1 project in the TIP. He noted that the project was initiated approximately five years ago by a former DOH district engineer. Based on further investigation, the current district engineer considered that this project is not feasible in terms of its right-of-way limitation and cost-effective performance. The TTAC reviewed this proposal and agreed to delete this project from the MPO Transportation Improvement Program. Councilperson Selin asked when DOH will reconsider any improvements in the project area. Mr. Carr noted that the MPO is currently conducting a transportation study in that area. Projects recommended by the study will have a significant impact on the whole transportation system in this region. Once those impacts are identified and evaluated, DOH will develop new strategies to improve the traffic condition in the project area. Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the proposed change in the TIP, seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Austin noted that WV DOH proposed a TIP Amendment for a resurfacing project on US 119 from Stewartstown Rd to Bakers Ridge Rd. Mr. Kelly moved to approve the proposed TIP Amendment, seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

6. Draft Title VI Plan

Mr. Austin noted that after discussions with the WVDOH and Federal Highway Administration it has been determined that the MPO does need a Title VI Plan. Staff has drafted the attached draft Title VI Plan using the Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle MPO's Plan as a model. This Plan was released to the public after the last Policy Board meeting. To date we have received no comments on the draft Plan. Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the MMMPO Title VI Plan, seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

7. Draft University Avenue Complete Streets Study

Mr. Austin noted that the report of University Ave Complete Street Study is included in the agenda package for review. The study is a multi-modal transportation study to identify alternatives to improve the transportation safety and efficiency for all users in the corridor. The CAC and TTAC have reviewed this report and recommended adoption to the Policy Board. Mr. Bruffy noted that in the last paragraph of page 49, the language regarding the proposed improvements on the Beverly/University/3rd Street intersection is ambiguous. It identifies an alternative to improve the intersection while referring to a City's traffic study to address the issues. Mr. Austin noted that the proposed alternative is advisory in nature. It provides a possible solution for further studies and does not preclude other alternatives for consideration. Mr. Austin noted that the pertinent language in that paragraph would be improved to clarify this intent.

Chairman Callen noted that he is concerned about the possibility that the City's traffic study on that intersection may rely solely on this recommendation and be reluctant to conduct further investigations for a better solution. Chairman Calen noted that it is prudent to clarify in this report that the recommendation at this intersection is viable only if it is supported by further analysis. Councilperson Selin suggested that the report include the language emphasizing the importance of providing adequate turning radius to accommodate emergency vehicles and school buses. Mr. Carr noted that a study in this type is to identify potential viable projects. Its recommendations are subject to further evaluation and modification during project development and design phases.

Councilperson Nugent asked about the next step for this plan after its adoption. Mr. Austin noted that in the short term implementing agencies can integrate some low cost projects in the normal road work maintenance or improvements, and DOH can initiate projects for TIP Amendments based on projects from this study. In the long term, the study can be used as a basis to justify major transportation investments in grant application.

Councilperson Nugent asked the amount that was requested in recent TIGER Grant application to improve the University Ave from Beechurst St to 3rd St. Mr. Austin noted that it was approximately 10 million from the the Federal government with 5 million local match. Councilperson Nugent asked if city's fire department was involved in developing alternatives at the Beverly St/University Ave intersection. Mr. Austin noted that city's fire department was not involved. Chairman Callen suggested that the TTAC recruit a member representing emergency service agencies in this region.

Councilperson Nugent pointed out that it is not sensible to invest such large amount of public resources to a roadway project that cannot ensure to solve majors traffic problems in that project area. He also noted that the proposed changes in the Falling Run Rd intersection area is likely to have negative impact to the adjacent neighborhood. It may induce traffic to Stewarts St and Yoke St, causing significant congestions. He is not satisfied that only one option was developed in the Loop area. Councilperson Nugent then noted that he is unconvinced that the proposed improvement in the Grumbein's Island area will be effective because it requires extensive enforcement which is unlikely. Councilperson Nugent noted that he will vote against the adoption of this plan unless significant changes are made to address those concerns.

Mr. Austin noted that the study are expected to provide a cohesive conceptual plan to improve the overall community livability in the University Ave corridor. They are not intended to solve all problems or to make any categorical conclusion for individual project development at an engineering level.

Chairman Callen noted that it may be appropriate to present all three proposed alternatives in the Grumbein's Island area without preference and to show the cost-effectiveness of each alternative respectively.

Councilperson Selin noted that the plan is well-documented and can be used as a guidance for concrete improvements in the future. She noted that the proposed changes will undoubtedly benefit the community. Councilperson Selin noted that if the Board decided to send the report back for revision, it will be helpful to specify the items that need to be addressed and to clarify the direction that the Board desires.

Chairman Callen noted that without pressing desire to adopt the study at this meeting, he is inclined to send the report back to allow the concerns raised to be addressed. Mayor Lewis moved a motion to send the report back for revision; seconded by Major Reid. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

8. Westover-Granville Pedestrian Study

Mr. Austin noted that the Westover-Granville Pedestrian Plan was conducted in house by MPO staff. It recommends 14 projects to improve the walkability in Westover and Granville. Mayor Lewis noted that proposed projects in this plan will greatly benefit the community. Councilperson Goodwin noted that she expects that the implementation of this plan will improve the safety on Fairmont Rd. Mr. Kelly moved to adopt this study, seconded by Mr. Bruffy. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

7. Other Business

Mr. Kelly asked the date of the next policy board meeting. Mr. Austin noted that it is June 16th.

11. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.