

Recommended Priority Short Term Projects (STP's) for Reducing Traffic Congestion in Monongalia County

MPO - September 18, 2003

In the interim while major projects such as Beechurst/University Ave. and other corridor improvements are being planned, it is recommend that the following short term projects be completed which can within a matter of weeks and months can make important differences in traffic flow in the area. The list of improvements proceed in order from the Westover Bridge to Beechurst to Pateson to Chestnut Ridge and 705, and outward.

Quick Improvements (Weeks)

1. Restrict continuous flow right turns from the Westover Bridge and establish a double lane at the Pleasant Street intersection for traffic proceeding South on University Avenue toward Deckers Creek.
2. Limit left hand turns traveling from Beechurst on to Fayette Street between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m.
3. Install a weekly timer on the light on Chestnut Ridge Road at North Elementary School so that the traffic light is only fully operative between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The change will accommodate the needs of Mylan as well.
4. On Stewartstown Road at the Hampton Center, place the traffic stop line in the left lane at the entrance of the Center driveway rather than at the 705 intersection to permit unobstructed access for vehicles entering the Center from the 705 intersection. In the right hand lane, allow continuing traffic flow to continue on to 705.

Short Term Improvements with Long Term Value (Months)

1. Install a short right turning lane onto the Westover Bridge from University Ave.
2. Upgrade intersection at Boulevard/entrance to the CAC.
3. Upgrade intersection and continuous right turning lanes at Pateson and University (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
4. Install turning lanes and upgrade intersection from "D" grade to "C" grade at Collins Ferry Road and Burroughs Street (as per letter to Wood from Murphy on 9/12/03.)
5. Upgrade intersection and double continuous turning lanes at Van Voorhis and Chestnut Ridge Road (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
6. Upgrade intersection and add continuous turning lanes at Pine View/ Chestnut Ridge Road intersection (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
7. Upgrade intersection and add continuous turning/acceleration lanes at 705/Willowdale Road intersection (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
8. Upgrade intersection and add continuous turning/acceleration lanes at 705/Stewartstown Road (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
9. Add lane to pavement traveling East on 705 toward the Mileground between Stewartstown Road intersection and Mileground Intersection.
10. Upgrade intersection and add turning/acceleration lanes at 705/Mileground intersection (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
11. Upgrade intersection and add turning/acceleration lanes at the Mileground Hartman Run Road intersection (DOH 2002 Intersections Report.)
12. Install directional lane lights on Mileground to utilize 2 lanes for heavy traffic in mornings (7-10) and afternoons (3-6) (experiment could utilize Greentree, PA model.)
13. Add acceleration lane on 857 for traffic turning at the base of Easton Hill toward I-68.
14. Upgrade intersection and add turning /acceleration lanes at the Route 7/Hartman Run Road intersection.

**Response to the Morgantown-Monongalia County Transportation Planning
Organization's Recommended Priority Short Term Projects for Reducing Traffic
Congestion in Monongalia County**

West Virginia Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
January 8, 2004

Quick Improvements

1. Right turns are presently permitted from the Westover Bridge onto University Avenue after vehicles stop under red conditions. This does not constitute a "continuous" right turn. Restricting the right turn on red could adversely affect traffic at the intersections along US 19 through Westover. Regarding the second part of this proposal, we believe that establishing double through lanes on University Avenue through the Pleasant Street intersection, without an exclusive right turn lane onto the Westover Bridge, would inhibit right turns and cause backups on southbound University/Beechurst Avenue at least through the Walnut Street intersection. The Division of Highways will perform more detailed analyses to determine whether the consequences of making these changes would create undesirable conditions elsewhere.
2. The Division of Highways will not normally restrict left turns for specific hours of the day because of the confusion such action can create for motorists. It is occasionally done where conditions warrant, however, and we can discuss this further with the MMCTPO's review committee. An alternative would be to restrict the left turn movement onto Fayette Street altogether. This would require further analysis to determine its effects on other intersections further south on US 119, since these intersections would have to absorb the left turns previously accommodated by Fayette Street.
3. The signal in question is part of a coordinated, interconnected signal system designed to expedite traffic flow along Chestnut Ridge Road. This signal is also semi-actuated, meaning that it remains green for traffic along Chestnut Ridge Road until a vehicle enters either the left-turn lane to the school approach, or the approach lanes to Chestnut Ridge Road from the school. As currently programmed, the signal allows motorists to make these turning movements without undue interference with traffic flow along Chestnut Ridge Road. It is doubtful that any improvement in traffic flow could be gained by turning the signal off between 6:30 pm and 6:30 am. Such action would also be contrary to signal operation criteria in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which West Virginia observes by law. We adjusted the signal this past September to improve the overall operation of the intersection and will continue to monitor it to determine whether additional adjustments should be made.
4. We have examined this situation before and are aware that Stewartstown Road motorists often block access to Hampton Center Drive. Ideally, the Hampton Center Drive approach should be located further from WV 705, but we realize this would be difficult to accomplish. We would like to discuss the possibilities for a solution with the MMCTPO's review committee.

Short Term Improvements

1. The suggestion to construct a turning lane from University Avenue onto the Westover Bridge is consistent with Division of Highways recommendations included in our recent Beechurst/University Avenue report. We have prepared the initial programming material for a project and will present it to the MMCTPO in the near future for inclusion in the MMCTPO's Transportation Improvement Program.
2. The objective for this recommendation is not clear to us. Please refer to the next comment below.
3. We agree that the Patteson Drive/Monongahela Boulevard intersection needs improvement. A project is under engineering development to add turning lanes. We anticipate advertising the project by next July, and completion by the end of the year. Any improvements to the nearby access to the Creative Arts Center, per your No. 2 recommendation, would need to be coordinated with this project. This is an item that we would like to discuss with the MMCTPO's review committee.
4. Analysis indicates the eventual need for turning lanes at the Collins Ferry Road/Burroughs Street intersection. Three-way-stop control was recently installed at the intersection as an interim measure until a more extensive project can be developed and financed. Construction of the turning lanes would not be a simple or inexpensive task.
5. A right turn lane is presently programmed for construction at the Van Voorhis/Chestnut Ridge Road intersection late in 2004, subject to the availability of funding. It will not be continuous.
6. Comment No. 5 above also applies to the Pineview/Chestnut Ridge Road intersection.
7. Comment No. 5 above also applies to the WV 705/Willowdale Road intersection.
8. Improvements to the WV 705/Stewartstown Road intersection are currently in discussion regarding a proposed land-use development in the vicinity. Certain improvements will likely be done at the private developer's expense. Interim improvements would not be prudent at this time.
9. Adding a lane to WV 705 between Stewartstown Road and the Mileground (US 119) is closely connected to the recommendation in No. 8 above and was discussed with the COMPACT group prior to formation of the MMCTPO. We believe this would be a worthwhile improvement and would be glad to discuss its possible construction with the MMCTPO's review committee.
10. Minor improvements were recently made to the Mileground (US 119)/WV 705 intersection. A right-turn lane from US 119 to WV 705 could provide further operational improvements. We will consider implementing such a project in the near future, as financing permits.
11. A project to add right-turn lanes at the Mileground (US 119)/Hartman Run Road intersection is presently scheduled for construction in 2004. The traffic signal will be upgraded as part of this project, and a left-turn phase will be provided for southbound US 119 motorists. The schedule for these improvements is subject to the availability of funding. Utility relocation problems for the project are being addressed at this time.
12. We have examined the proposal for reverse-directional lanes for morning and afternoon travel on the Mileground in the recent past and have identified a number of potential problems with its implementation. Although we do not view the Mileground as a good candidate for such a project at this time, we would be glad to discuss it in more detail with the MMCTPO's review committee.

13. Although we are not aware of the present need for an acceleration lane on Monongalia County Route 857 at the base of Easton Hill, toward I-68, we would be glad to discuss this recommendation further with the MMCTPO's review committee.
14. We will consider the recommendation for new turning lanes at the WV 7/Hartman Run Road intersection, but at present we question the need for acceleration lanes. It is possible that intersection improvements could be integrated with the WV 7 widening project. New traffic count information has indicated the need for signal timing adjustments, and the existing traffic signal may need to be upgraded. This overall recommendation will require further evaluation. We will be glad to discuss this recommendation with the MMCTPO's review committee.

Supplemental Comments

In reviewing the MMCTPO's list of recommended improvements to the street and highway system, it is apparent that several of these improvements would be more difficult and expensive to implement than the originators of the list may realize. Other recommendations on the list may address particular traffic problems but could unintentionally create others. Proposed solutions to traffic problems often can appear attractive on the surface, but they are not always feasible, effective, or affordable. We do hope to move forward, as finances permit, with the recommendations that appear most promising.

Many of the traffic problems identified on the list exist primarily during peak travel periods. A complementary approach at the local level to address these problems at their sources may be just as effective, if not more so, than many of the physical modifications recommended in the list. An inventory of current traffic volumes generated by the area's major employers, and a subsequent investigation regarding the possible implementation of such measures as flexible work hours, altered work schedules, and telecommuting may be an excellent transportation planning opportunity for the MMCTPO to undertake. Taking this approach a step further, we recognize that the greater Morgantown area is developing very rapidly. We believe the area will eventually need to seriously address the interrelationship of land use and traffic generation if it wishes transportation service to keep pace with the future demand.