

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
MAY 15, 2014 MINUTES (DRAFT)

Members Present: Chairman Anthony Giambrone-Star City, Mayor Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Councilperson Bill Kawecky Shamberger-Morgantown, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Joe Statler-Blacksville, Randy Hudak-WVU, Councilperson Marti Shamberger-City of Morgantown, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-Westover, Commissioner Eldon Callen-Monongalia County.

Members Absent: Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Vice-Chairman Wesley Nugent-Morgantown.

MPO Director: Bill Austin

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Giambrone called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. Public Comment

None

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that there are two sets of minutes for Board approval. One is for the Policy Board Meeting on April 17, 2014, and the other is for the Policy Board Meeting on April 23, 2014.

Mr. Kelly moved to accept both minutes as submitted; seconded by Councilperson Shamberger. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Rice, Chair of the CAC, reported that the CAC recommended to not approve the WV-7/Brookhaven Rd TIP Amendment. The recommendation was made on the grounds that since there are already three traffic lights on the short segment of WV-7 in the Brookhaven area, adding one more traffic light may not be justifiable. He then reported that the CAC recommended to approve Mountain Line TIP Amendment with a request for clarification on the funding mechanism employed by this amendment. Mr. Rice noted that the CAC applauded the Greenbag Rd study prepared by Mr. Zhang, and suggested that such work be conducted for appropriate locations in the Morgantown area as an asset to WV DOH.

b. Financial Report

Chairman Giambrone stated that the April financial report is postponed to the next policy board meeting in June, since Mayor Lewis, the Board Treasurer, is absent.

V. Executive Directors Report

Regarding to the financial report, Mr. Austin added that the April financial report was included in the agenda package of this meeting for the Board's information

Mr. Austin reported that he had scheduled a meeting with Sec. Mattox on May 23 to discuss the Mileground recommendation. This meeting was requested by Commissioner Callen and agreed to by Chairman Giambrone. A letter capturing the essence of perspectives from the MPO on the Mileground project was sent to the Secretary and copied to the Board members. Mr. Austin then reported that a new interim district engineer for the Morgantown area has been appointed and a new district design engineer will also be in position soon. Mr. Austin stated that the MPO is expecting to develop a productive working relationship with them.

VI. Acceptance of Audit

Chairman Giambrone noted that a copy of the MPO's FY 2013 Audit is enclosed in the agenda package of this meeting. Hard copies of this audit were provided to the Policy Board at the April 23 Meeting.

Councilperson Shamberger moved to accept the Audit as submitted; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

VI. Appointment of Citizens Advisory Committee Members

Mr. Austin stated that not all eligible appointments have been made to the MPO's Citizens Advisory Committee and some previously appointed members have not been attending the meeting. He further noted that those who have not participated are Mr. Busz, Mr. Delaney, Mr. Renner, and Mr. Richmond, and that Monongalia County has only appointed two representatives to the Committee when there are three positions available to the county.

Commissioner Callen asked if a CAC appointment is permanent. He mentioned that it is inconvenient to check the attendance of the appointee once an appointment is made.

Mr. Austin answered that Policy Board members decide the appointees representing their agencies. He also mentioned that a learning curve is common for the CAC members in understanding the documents presented to them, and a CAC appointment which lasts at least two years is preferable. He also noted that the attendance could be checked by reviewing the CAC meeting minutes posted on the MPO's website. Staff records the attendance for each meeting.

VII. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

WV-7/Brookhaven Road TIP Amendment-Mr. Austin reported that the correct location for this project has been confirmed with the WV DOH. He noted that the TTAC recommended approval of this project, but the CAC recommended not to approve this project, because they did not have adequate documentation to justify the traffic signal installation at that intersection. Mr. Austin then noted that a summary of traffic light warrant study have been provided by the WV DOH as a response to the inquest from the CAC. The warrant, as shown in the summary, indicated that the subject intersection satisfies the warrant for traffic light installation.

Mr. Bruffy asked if the option of installing an actuated traffic light has been considered, in which a sensor is placed to trigger the green.

Mr. Carr noted that warrant was based on traffic volume and delay. He presumed that the actuated signal option would be assessed at following stages.

Mr. Bruffy raised his concern that at certain locations, pretimed traffic lights reduce the efficiency of transit operations during off peak hours, because those lights are not able to adjust its circle length to reflect the change in the traffic volumes of that time.

Mr. Austin noted that an actuated signal at this project location may not be appropriate because it is adjacent to a signalized intersection.

Mon-Fayette Expressway Park and Ride-Mr. Austin noted that the WV DOH is requesting to removing the Engineering and Right of Way phases associated with this project, since this work has been accomplished as a part of a different project.

Mr. Bruffy asked about the status of this project.

Mr. Carr said that he has been told that the advertising for this project will be conducted soon.

Mr. Austin added that this project is scheduled for construction in the August timeframe. Mr. Austin then noted that positive progress has been made to revive the Mon-Blvd Center-turn-lane project.

Mountain Line Transit TIP Amendment-Mr. Austin noted that the Mountain Line Transit Authority is requesting a slight shift in funding, which in the future might be done administratively. Specifically, Mountain Line requests that the Section 5307 New Fit and Senior Mons Federal Funding for FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016 be combined into the fiscal year of 2014.

Mr. Bruffy mentioned that the program and purpose associated with these amendments are unaffected, He further advised that Mountain Line is proposing to establish a mechanism, which allows that the MPO and the Mountain Line Transit Authority to conduct appropriate administrative adjustments on TIP amendments which would have no effect on the type and the purpose of the original program and have no practical impact on the public. He then suggested that those administrative adjustments could be submitted to the state for acceptance and amended into the STIP by reference. Mr. Bruffy noted that the change he is proposing is a procedural change.

Mr. Austin stated that the procedural change suggested by Mr. Bruffy can enhance the efficiency for processing many TIP Amendments proposed by Mountain Line and possibly by WVU for the PRT. He suggested that this type of administrative adjustments would be publicized as a part of the MPO Policy Board meetings, publicized online, and presented to the Board so that pertinent federal regulations are satisfied.

Commissioner Callen concurred with Mr. Austin's opinion.

Mr. Austin noted that the first TIP Amendment subject to Board approval is the WV-7 and Brookhaven Rd Intersection Improvement.

Commissioner Callen asked about the configuration proposed by WV DOH for this intersection. He stated that when providing an exclusive left-turn into Brookhaven Rd from WV 7, the WV DOH should consider a continuous through-lane on WV 7 at the intersection, which is not controlled by the proposed traffic signal. He stated that he is not inclined to vote on this project unless the proposed configuration is known. He noted that the WV DOH should provide more detailed information on the proposed TIP amendment, so that the Board has enough resources to make an informed decision.

Mr. Carr noted that there will be an exclusive left-turn lane into Brookhaven Rd from WV 7 and an exclusive right-turn lane into WV 7 from Brookhaven Rd, and that there is no information available on the specific alignment for this improvement.

Mr. Bruffy agreed with Commissioner Callen's opinion, and added that to reflect any procedural change in communication between the MPO and the WV DOH, guidelines used to review the project should be changed accordingly.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO can request more information from WV DOH on the proposed design details. He also noted that it may not be appropriate for the MPO to specify the design of a TIP amendment project.

Mr. Kelly stated that he has confidence in state engineers in designing this project, but the information on the design may not be available at this stage of the project. Mr. Kelly stated that his concern is that WV DOH may not

be able to provide any details for this project unless the Board approves them to do so and that it is common that WV DOH bring the design work back the MPO for review.

Mr. Carr noted that the design phase only occurs after the TIP amendment is approved, and noted that at this moment, he is unsure what extra information will be available for this project.

Mr. Austin stated that from what he has heard the Board needs to evaluate a conceptual design for this project before they vote on it.

Mayor Selin noted that the Board should be aware that there were different opinions from the TTAC and the CAC concerning this TIP amendment and the state should provide a conceptual diagram for this project. She stated that one feasible way to solve this issue is that the Board approve the funding for this project and ask the WV DOH to bring back its design for the Board review. She further asked about the time frame for this project.

Mr. Austin noted that it is expected to be constructed next summer.

Commissioner Callen asked if it is a normal practice for state engineers to consider the opinions from the Board when they do the design works on a project.

Mr. Carr noted that state engineers employ an appropriately comprehensive point of view when they do their design work and they ensure that the project will work properly. He also noted that opinions from the Board and the general public is considered in the design process.

Mr. Hudak asked the function of the TTAC when they do not have technical information presented to them for review.

Mr. Austin noted that depending on the scale of a project, the TTAC provides input at various levels based on their professional judgment. The TIP project being proposed at the Brookhaven/WV 7 intersection is considered as a relatively small scale project, and the TTAC presumed that a standard treatment will be implemented.

Mr. Bruffy added that many TIP amendment projects do not contain any technical issue to consider. He further stated that it is advantageous to have the preliminary knowledge of the design of the project when the Board makes a decision for that project.

Mr. Austin mentioned that this issue has been recognized by the WV MPO association and it is a high priority issue for the association is to improve the communication between the WV DOH and MPOs across the state. The next meeting is on June 25, in which the WV DOH will provide a training on accessing a crash data system maintained by the state and the TIP subcommittee will work on developing a framework to formalize TIP descriptions.

Commissioner Callen moved to approve the engineering and right-of-way phases for the TIP amendment on Brookhaven Rd/WV 7 intersection improvement with a request that the DOH present more information, such as a concept plan, on this project in the June meeting, addressing issues discussed in this meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bruffy. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Austin noted that the second TIP amendment presented to the board is the removal of the TIP project associated with the engineering and right of way phases of Mon-Fayette Expressway Park and Ride project.

Commissioner Callen moved approval of this TIP amendment; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Austin noted that the next TIP amendment presented to the board is the amendment proposed by the Mountain Line Transit Authority.

Mayor Selin moved to approval this TIP amendment; seconded by Commissioner Callen. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

IX. Draft RFQ for I-79 Access Study

Mr. Austin stated that the original purpose of I-79 access study was to justify a new bridge over the Monongahela River with roadway connection to I-79, as recommended in the MPO's 2040 LRTP. The project focused on two issues: the connection between I-79 and Monongahela Blvd from Downtown and WV 705, and the congestion on WV 705 corridor. The access study consists of the technical background for the initial phase of the project by providing analysis for a project purpose and need statement that may be used as part in the environmental documents. This project includes enhanced modeling, and preliminary public involvement. Mr. Austin further stated that this access study will facilitate the transition of this study from planning stage to engineering and environmental evaluation stages.

Mr. Austin noted that the proposed budget for this access study is \$250,000 for two fiscal years. Currently, the city of Morgantown has confirmed the finding for the match for this study, but Monongalia County has not allocated sufficient funding to accomplish this task for the coming fiscal year. The RFQ will be released once this budget issue is resolved.

Mr. Bruffy moved a motion to accept the draft RFQ for this access study with the contingency that the Monongahela County will provide sufficient funding for the match for this study; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

X. Presentation on Draft Greenbag Rd-Kingwood Pike Intersection Study

Mr. Zhang Jing, a MPO Transportation Planner, made a presentation on the Greenbag Rd and Kingwood Pike intersection study. The study identified deficiencies that can be addressed through a variety of alternative.

Mayor Selin commented that the Synchro software used in this study is very helpful.

Mr. Austin noted that this type of planning level work can be used as an advisory information for WV DOH district engineers.

Chairman Giambrone inquired about the average annual growth rate used in the this study.

Mr. Austin noted that a growth rate of 1.03% was used, as recommended by the WV DOH, which is slightly higher than the one used in the 2040 LRTP model.

XI. Other Business

Mayor Selin mentioned that a celebration and fireworks have been scheduled on Westover Bridge and Highway on July 4th. She asked how this event may be effected by the bridge painting project.

Mr. David Weaver, a consultant of this project, stated that this project will start in the early June and that it will take three to six months to complete. He noted that there has been coordination with the city and DOH to minimize the construction impact on the July 4th event, especially arranging the location for placing the construction equipment.

XII. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.