



TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY MEETING

August 8th, 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:

Bill Austin (Chair), Andrew Gast-Bray, Rickie Yeager, Brian Carr, Michael Dougherty, Kara Greathouse (DOH), Jeremy Evans, Paul Burns, Drew Gatlin, Damien Davis

Others Present: Jacqueline Peate, Jing Zhang,

1. Call to Order

The TTAC meeting was held virtually and in person. The phone number and web address to access the teleconference were publicized. With a quorum present, Mr. Austin called the meeting of the TTAC to order at 1:04 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Mr. Gast-Bray moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Yeager. The motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

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. Carr asked about how the construction of Willey Street will affect the scope of the study. Mr. Austin clarified they will use historic Streetlight data to address this issue. There will be a focus on data collection for pedestrians. The consulting firm is aware of these roadblocks.

Mr. Gast-Bray moved to recommend the adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program Amendment; seconded by Mr. Yeager.

Mr. Gatlin asked if money was always planned to be coming from STBG Mr. Austin said yes.

Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment

Mr. Austin informed the TTAC 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. DOT 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. Gast-Bray mentioned this advisory committee would benefit from more technical discussion about bridges, more information about these alternatives. Mr. Austin clarified that there will be a full environmental assessment, and there will be a public meeting. He also noted this project is more of an economic development project than a transportation project. The MMMPO's transportation efforts help in promoting economic development.

Mr. Gatlin asked for clarification on the push behind this project. He finds it hard to believe that these bridge alternatives are easier to construct than Harmony Groove, and does not agree that the bridge design can qualify them as an urban bridge. Mr. Gatlin raised concern on how this project will impact disaster planning, and voiced support that bridge should be multi-modal.

Mr. Dougherty asked about alternative three and how traffic will be rerouted in relation to Smithtown Rd. and Grafton Road. He also asked for clarification on what TTAC is recommending. Mr. Austin said the main recommendation would be moving the project to Tier 2, and if they would like they can recommend an alternative.

Mr. Dougherty moved to recommend the recommendation of moving the southern bridge to Tier 2; seconded by Mr. Gast-Bray.

With no further discussion, the motion passed with two abstentions; Mr. Davis and Mr. Carr.

Mr. Gast-Bray commented that the TTAC requires more information before recommending a specific alternative. TTAC did not make a recommendation of an alternative for the Policy Board.

5. Status of Suballocated Funds Project Applications

Mr. Austin gave the TTAC an update on 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. Mr. Gatlin asked for clarification on who is eligible. Mr. Austin clarified that the entity must provide proof of coordination with WVDOH.

6. Other Business

No other business.

7. Meeting Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 1:41.