



## POLICY BOARD MEETING

Monongalia County Commission Chamber

August 18, 2022, 6 PM

Virtual Meeting Link:

<https://morgantownmonongaliampo.my.webex.com/meet/baustin>

### Members Present:

Chair Ron Justice-WVU, Vice-Chair Mike Kelly-Board of Education. Treasurer-Mayor Patricia Lewis, Recorder Steve Blinco-Westover Commissioner Tom Bloom, Mr. Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Kawecki-City of Morgantown, Mayor Jenifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County, Mr. Joe Statler-Blacksville.

**MPO Director:** Bill Austin, AICP

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### 1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chair Justice called the meeting of the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) Policy Board to order at 6:00 PM.

### 2. Public Comment

Mark Nesselroad, a Monongalia residence, expressed his support on proposed improvements in the I-79 Exit 155 area to connect Mylan Park to Westover and Morgantown.

Matthew Cross, chairman of Morgantown Pedestrian safety board, suggested enhanced pedestrian surface cross on Beechurst Ave between Campus Dr and University Ave. He expressed his support of the Willey Street sidewalk project.

Dr. Kevin Trembush, a property owner on Van Voorhis Rd, expressed his concern over the Van Voorhis Rd project. He urged the MPO defund the project, noting that the current design of the project is not an optimal solution to improve the intersection of Van Voorhis Rd and Burroughs St. In addition, it will significantly impact his business.

Lenard George, a property owner on Van Voorhis Rd, expressed his support to Dr. Trembush and also urged the MPO to defund the Van Voorhis Rd project. He noted that there are other

alternative to improve the intersection without imposing significant impact to the adjacent property.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Justice noted that the minutes for the last meeting were included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Bloom moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

### **4. Committee Report**

#### *a. Citizens Advisory Committee*

Mr. Austin noted that the Chairman of the CAC was not able to attend the meeting. The last CAC meeting had a very good quorum. The attending committee members reviewed the agenda item and recommended approval of the TIP Amendment and draft policies as presented.

#### *b. Finance Committee*

Mayor Lewis briefed the Board on the financial report:

At the beginning of June, the balance was \$19,956.71. The expenditures were \$56,995.61 with three deposits of 39,743.82, leaving a balance of \$ 2,704.92 at the end of June.

Mr. Statler moved to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

#### *c. Executive Director*

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO got a RAISE Grant for the eastern portion of Greenbag Rd project. The total amount for the grant is 4. 2 million. It is for the design of the section from Lucky Ln to Deckers Creek Blvd and the section from the Mountaineer Mall entrance to Don Knotts Blvd. The grant will also fund a feasibility study on the off-road trail identified in the MPO's 2015 study of on Greenbag Rd. If deemed feasible, the off-road trail will be designed.

Mr. Austin noted that Jing Zhang, the Planner II of the MPO, has been elected as the Chair of the American Planning Association International Division. His service shows his professionalism recognized by his colleagues.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is interested in potential hosting the WV planning conference in 2023. It expects to occur in the fall of 2023 or the spring of 2024.

Mr. Austin noted that he has been nominated as one of five candidates running for two seats at the Board of Director of the Association of MPOs.

Mayor Kawecki asked if the proposed off-road trail in the grant can be extended to the White Park. Mr. Austin noted that the trail is only extent to the Mountainview elementary school.

### **5. Presentation by WestRidge**

Commissioner Bloom noted that the Mon County Commission has submitted a grant to expend and enhance the DOH project on I-79 Exit 155. The project will allow the community to have a true gateway to Morgantown and Start City. It will connect the Mylan Park, Granville, WestRidge development, and the rest of the community. If funded, the project will have significant impact to the region in a long term.

Megan O'Reilly, the Director of External Relations, made a presentation about the WestRidge grant application.

Councilperson Selin noted the importance of connection the Star City Bridge to the Caperton Trail. She noted that there has been a grant for the connection a few years.

Mr. Carr noted that if he has the name of grant, he can reach out the DOH staff to check the status of the grant.

## **7. Public Involvement Policy**

Mr. Austin noted that enclosed in the agenda is a copy of the draft Public Involvement Policy as modified from comments received at the last TTAC and CAC meetings. Changes to the document include a more robust description of the MPO's partnership for public involvement for amendments and adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program with Mountain Line. MMMPO Staff released the draft policy to the public in June. No public comments were received on the proposed policy.

Commissioner Bloom moved to adopt the policy as presented; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Request for Proposals for On Call Engineering and Planning Services**

Mr. Austin noted that several MPO around the state have developed an On Call Engineering contract with engineering firms to address increasing needs of engineering service to implement MPO's projects. The enclosed draft On Call services RFQ provides for the MPO to enter into a contract with up to 3 firms to perform on-call services. The proposed contract would not obligate the MPO to spend any funds with a firm but it would provide the MPO with a set fee structure for engaging engineering firms for specific tasks.

Mr. Kelly asked about the length of the contract and how the selection process will be carried out.

Mr. Austin noted that contract length is one year with potential extension for another year at the end of the first year of the contract. The RFQ will be duly advertised on the newspapers, MPO's website, and other professional venues.

Mr. Carr asked about the selection committees. Mr. Austin noted that the selection committee will mainly consist of the Transpiration Technical Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Sikora noted that he will discussion with the Executive Director about the connection between technical evaluation and financial evaluation in the RFQ after the meeting.

## **9. Proposed Safe Streets for All Grant Zero Fatalities Resolution**

Mr. Austin noted that included in the agenda package is a resolution adopting a “Zero Fatality” approach to traffic safety. Adoption of this policy will support the MPO’s application for a Safe Streets for All grant application. The grant seeks to spur systemic change to improve safety for an area’s transportation network so it can consist of more than one project and state departments of transportation are not eligible to apply for a grant.

MPO Staff has been working with Policy Board Members and agency staff to develop a list of projects for the grant application

Currently, the grant application includes the Willey Street Reconstruction/Relocation project, two projects in Star City, and several projects in Granville. Mountain Line has also expressed an interest in participating in the grant application.

The City of Morgantown is to provide additional projects prior to the Policy Board meeting. In addition to proposing construction projects for the grant the MPO is working with WVU Medicine to develop a traffic safety/active transportation educational outreach effort to inform the area’s residents about traffic safety and active transportation which promotes health as well as helps to reduce traffic congestion.

Commissioner Sikora moved to adopt the solution as presented; seconded by Recorder Blinco. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

Commissioner Bloom raised a concern about the delay of the River Road Slid Repair project. He noted that as the mountain top is opening up soon in the Morgantown Industrial Park, high volume of truck traffic is expected in Westover. The project delay could impose heavy traffic on the primary roads in Westover. Commissioner Bloom suggested sending a letter DOH to express those concerns.

## **10. Travel Policy Amendment**

Mr. Austin noted that as part of an ongoing review of the MPO’s policies staff looked at the MPO’s travel policy. It was noted that the MPO does not have a per diem policy for travel outside of the area. Staff reviewed several different policies and is recommending that the MPO adopt the rates from the United State General Services Administration per diem policy for West Virginia.

Commissioner Sikora moved to adopt the policy as presented; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **11. Other Business**

Mr. Solomon noted that some local streets in Westover are not in good condition. He noted that the growth of Industrial Park will impose more truck traffic on the local streets. He urged the MPO consider improvement on the local streets in Westover and reducing the impact of truck traffic.

Commissioner Sikora noted that the industrial park access project has been vetted by the Westover residents and received overwhelming support. The improvement on DuPont Rd and Fairmont Rd are included in the plan.

Mr. Austin noted that he has been reaching out Westover to identify potential projects to be included in the Safe Street for All grant application.

Commissioner Sikora responded to the concerns on Van Voorhis project. He noted that the MPO understand the concerns raised by the property owners. The DOH is in the process of identifying an optional solution for the intersection. It is expected that the DOH will start a conversation with property owners in the right-of-way process to identify a satisfiable way to address the access management issues.

Mr. Austin noted that it is a standard practice that DOH negotiate with the property owners in the right-of-way process to decide the final design. Mr. Austin noted that he will reach out DOH engineers for an update on process on this issue.

Councilperson Kawecky urged that all parties proactively work out a satisfiable solution on the issue. It is important to solve a problem at the beginning before that problem grows into a long-term issue.

Chairman Justice noted that the community has been waiting for a long time to see the changes on Mileground Rd and Greenbag Rd. He encouraged to keep the momentum and move forward the gateway project on I-79 Exit 155.

## **12. Meeting adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.