



CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 12th, 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: Christiaan Abildso (Chairman), Chip Wamsley, Heather Morgan, Thomas Zeni

Others Present: Bill Austin, Jacqueline Peate, Jing Zhang

1. Call to Order

The CAC meeting was held virtually and in person. The phone number and web address to access the teleconference were publicized. With a quorum present, Mr. Abildso called the meeting of the CAC to order at 6:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Mr. Zeni moved to approve the meeting minutes as edited; seconded by Mr. Wamsley; with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

Mr. Austin stated the West Virginia Department of Transportation-Division of Highways has requested the following TIP Amendments:

ADD

MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD

Federal ID: STBG2023312D. Engineering. FY2023. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$3,720,000; Total funds: \$4,650,000. Obligation Date: 10/28/2023.

Federal ID: STBG2023313D. Right of Way. FY2024. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$6,400,000; total funds: \$8,000,000. Obligation Date: 10/28/2023.

Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction. FY2024. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$57,600,000; total funds: \$72,000,000. Obligation Date: 2/28/2024.

MODIFY

STAR CITY INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT (I-79 Exit 155).

-Federal ID: NHPP0079156D, Construction. FY2028. Reconstruct interchange. Federal Funds: \$59,400,000, total funds: \$66,000,000. Action: Move to FFY 2029, changing to federal funded projects with \$59,400,000 federal funds.

Mr. Abildso raised concern about the interchange justification for the Industrial Park. Mr. Austin does not have an update, but when he spoke with DOH, they said the bridge will happen more quickly. Mr. Abildso was additionally concerned about the timeline of Harmony Grove and the Industrial Park Bridge. He was concerned that the Harmony Grove Interchange may be canceled if the Bridge is built before the Interchange construction begins. Mr. Austin stated the Governor has expressed support for both projects. FHWA will still need to approve both projects.

Mr. Zeni asked if the DOH was still looking at different options, even though Option 3 was chosen by the Policy Board.

Mr. Abildso was disappointed with the WVDOH Public Meeting, and mentioned that all options of location are still under consideration. Ms. Morgan was additionally disappointed with lack of communication and the rushed nature of the WVDOH meeting. Mr. Austin said that the NEPA process still has to occur (occurs during Engineering phase), meaning all three options are open, but community support has identified alternative 3 as the option. Mr. Zeni stated he wanted more clarity moving forward with this project.

Due to the lack of written confirmation of location and the Southern Bridge's low ranking on the MTP, the CAC decided to break up the TIP Amendments and vote on each phase for the Industrial Park separately, and vote on modifying the Star City TIP separately.

ADD INDUSTRIAL PARK

Engineering- Mr. Zeni moved to approve recommendation for Engineering; seconded by Mr. Abildso. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Right of Way- Mr. Zeni moved to approve recommendation for ROW; seconded by Ms. Morgan. Mr. Austin clarified the land for potential alternative 3 is owned by only one owner. Mr. Morgan raised concern of delegating funds for ROW without an official option chosen. The motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Abildso against.

Construction- Mr. Zeni moved to not approve recommendation Construction; seconded by Mr. Abildso. Mr. Zeni and Ms. Morgan raised concern about the timeline for this project, it seems very rushed and quick. Mr. Austin mentioned funds exist for preliminary data collection, and the WVDOH has done research for different locations. There has been some behind the scenes work. The CAC expressed concern for lack of communication between WVDOH and the community. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Christiaan Abildso confirmed that A large part of the CAC's concern is that while the Governor announced alternative 3 will be chosen, the process is still on going and open for choosing the location, and it has not been written down and officially approved. The CAC would like more communication and transparency with the community. They do not want to recommend funding for construction when they do not know for sure, on paper, where the bridge will be located.

MODIFY STAR CITY

Mr. Zeni moved to approve recommendation for modifying the Star City TIP; seconded by Mr. Wamsley. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Suballocated Funds Project Applications

Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO has approximately \$1.8 million dollars in suballocated STBG and Carbon Reduction Programs funds available to program projects in our area. He noted the agenda contains a memorandum identifying the project applications submitted for these funds as well as staff's recommendation concerning these projects. Two applicants, City of Morgantown and Mon River Trails Conservancy did not demonstrate coordination with DOH, while Westover did demonstrate this. MMMPO Staff recommends approving Westover, and tentatively approving City of Morgantown and MRTC pending DOH approval.

Mr. Abildso abstained from voting or discussion as he on the MRTC board.

Mr. Zeni asked about what occurs when a project is underfunded. Mr. Austin stated they can apply for more funding from the state, other sources, or re-apply for more funds from the Suballocated Funds.

Mr. Zeni moved to approve the recommendation of the Suballocated Funds Project Applications; seconded by Ms. Morgan. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Draft Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Austin noted that it has been approximately two years since the MPO adopted a new TIP, and the agenda contains a draft TIP for the CAC's review. The MMMPO respectfully requests that the CAC recommend release of this document for public comment, and staff anticipate that the Policy Board will adopt the new TIP at their November meeting.

Mr. Abildso mentioned some errors in the packet, and staff noted the provided version of the Draft Transportation Improvement Program was an older version, staff will send the CAC the fixed and correct version of the TIP 2024-28 for their review. The correct version is on the MMMPO website.

6. Other Business

Mr. Austin updated the CAC that Staff has completed a pedestrian data collection at 705 and Maple Dr. Staff is waiting on transit data from Mountain Line to add to the report, and the report should be completed for November meetings. The preliminary results will be sent to the advisory board.

Mr. Abildso congratulated Ms. Smith on her position at Mountain Line.

Mr. Wamsley resorted some difficulty navigating the Mileground and Roundabout.

7. Meeting Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM