



243 High Street Room 026
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 291-9571
www.plantgether.org

Agenda

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
243 High Street Room 026 and by WEBEX
Morgantown WV
August 8, 2023

1:00 PM

1. Call To Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment
4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment
5. Status of Suballocated funds project applications
6. Other Business
7. Meeting Adjournment



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Memorandum

Date: August 2, 2023
To: TTAC Members
From: Bill Austin, AICP
Subject: August 8, 2023 TTAC Meeting Agenda Items

This memorandum is to inform you of the items under consideration in the May 2023 TTAC Agenda.

-TIP Amendments and Adjustments-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

It is respectfully requested that the TTAC recommend approval of the TIP Amendment to the MPO Policy Board.

-Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment-Please see the memorandum transmitted with the Agenda for more information on this item.



TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY MEETING

June 6th, 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, Maria Smith, Rickie Yeager, Jason Stinespring, Drew Gatlin

Others Present: Jacqueline Peate, Jing Zhang, Kevin Sullivan, Dan Estep

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 1:06 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package. Mr. Yeager moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Ms. Smith; motion to amend the minutes by Mr. Gast-Bray. He noted that Brian Carr was listed as attending the last meeting and this was incorrect. The motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

3. TIP Amendments and Adjustments

Mr. Austin discussed the proposed TIP Amendments and Administrative changes to the MPO's TIP under the MPO's recently adopted policy. Administrative changes include bridge reconstruction and refurbishment. These changes came due to a new STIP being implemented. The proposed TIP Amendment is to program the Right of Way acquisition and construction of the Smithtown Road/US 119 intersection. The Right of Way Phase is \$100,000, with \$90,000 in Federal Funds. The Obligation Date is 4/28/2024. The Construction Phase has \$1,080,000 in Federal Funds and \$1,200,000 in total funds. The Obligation Date is 6/28/2024.

Mr. Gast-Bray notes that DOH providing a map and more location information would be helpful. Mr. Gatlin noted additional details would help. He also commented on Willey Street ADA cross walk expansion tripling in funding, curious about what this entails. Bill said he has talked with district about crossing, but will continue to ask the district for more details. Mr. Yeager had a question about Right of Way phase being completed on Van Voorhis Rd. Mr. Austin clarified that they are just moving their schedule for this particular phase. Mr. Austin noted the Brookhaven project is moving forward and will be designed by the district. Design should be underway this month. Mr. Austin noted that design phase for Smithtown project had been previously approved.

Mr. Yeager moved to recommend the adoption of the TIP Amendments to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Gast-Bray. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Downtown Microsimulation Study Scope of Work

Mr. Austin noted that the next item was the scope of work for the Downtown Microsimulation Study for planning and traffic engineering services for the Morgantown Downtown Traffic Study. The purpose of the 'Downtown Traffic Study' is to recommend potential future reconfigurations of the downtown Morgantown transportation network based on a data driven process with additional input from the community and stakeholders. A draft of the Scope has been reviewed by the Study Steering Committee members. Kimley Horn has modified the Scope per those comments. This project is funded with \$400,000 of Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Funding. Part of MPO's suballocation are these funds. \$100,000 of funding coming from Monongalia County, City of Morgantown, Morgantown Area Partnership, and WVU.

Mr. Gatlin noted that the Bike/Ped Safety Board previously discussed this scope of work and they were concerned about language not including safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Mr. Austin clarified the intent of the scope, and agreed to change language to clarify/include pedestrian safety concerns. The Highway Safety Program has meeting on 13th, Mr. Austin will be attending, and this will be folded into their Highway Safety Initiative. Mr. Austin noted that steering committee will review the past Morgantown bike/ped safety study, and this Highway Safety Program to provide concerns to the consultants so they can include them in the Scope of Work. Mr. Gast-Bray agreed with clarifying pedestrians being included in study, and this being included in results. Mr. Yeager commented that Task 5, looking at configuration of one-way streets as an alternative was great.

Mr. Gatlin moved to recommend the recommendation of the Downtown Microsimulation Study Scope of Work to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Yeager. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Other Business

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO will be pushing for a quick implantation of the Highway Safety Initiative. The Policy Board requested more time to review the Suballocated Funds Application Policy. We will presenting the revised version on 15th. Changed include that all projects are considered. Due to competition among municipalities, there will be a Review Committee (Board of Education and WVU). Mr. Austin provided multiple opportunities for meetings and phone calls for the Policy Board to review this policy. The MMMPO is leading the way for this policy statewide. We are trying to get other MPOs around state (Hagerstown, Parkersburg, and Charleston) to adopt, using ours as a guide.

Ms. Smith noted that vanpools are picking up and becoming more active. Mountain Lion has about 20 vanpools currently. They are continuing to work on the Micro transit service, and found a new partner-Spare. Working on getting the program ready for riders by end of the month.

8. Meeting Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 1:38.



Memorandum

Date: August 2, 2023

From: Bill Austin, AICP

To: MPO Committee Members

Subject: Proposed Southern Bridge

This memorandum is to inform the MMMPO's committees 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. A map identifying the potential locations for this bridge as well as diagrams showing the potential traffic impacts of the alternatives are included with this memorandum.

Background

The MMMPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes the construction of the Harmony Grove interchange to provide MIP with access to I-79. MPO Staff conducted a feasibility study to determine if this interchange should be included in the urban area's transportation plan in 2018. That Study also looked at alternatives to the interchange including construction of a bridge south of the Westover Bridge. The MTP includes this bridge but it has not been a priority for the MPO's Policy Board and was included in the "Funded by Others" category of the MTP.

WVDOH has been working with the owners of the MIP and Mountain Top Beverage to develop the Harmony Grove Interchange. This process has been slow due to a variety of factors including the need for approval of the interchange from the Federal Highway Administration. Due to the long time it has taken to develop the Interchange Justification Report (IJR), WVDOH has been concerned that the interchange cannot be constructed quickly enough to meet the needs of Mountain Top Beverage. Stating that they can construct a bridge faster than they can get approval for and construct the Harmony Grove Interchange, WVDOH proposed the construction of a new bridge and connecting roadway while keeping the Harmony Grove Interchange moving forward for eventual construction. WVDOH has had a preliminary design study performed to evaluate potential locations for the proposed bridge.

Process

MPO staff respectfully recommends that the MPO's committee members consider the question of whether or not a new bridge should be considered in two parts:

- 1) Is there a need for a new bridge south of the existing Westover Bridge? Answering this question is key for determining whether or not the MTP priority list should be amended to include this project in a tier higher than

the “To be funded by others” category and a subsequent TIP Amendment. Staff recommends that the Policy Board consider the proposed land uses in the area from applicable Comprehensive Plan(s) and similar issues when looking at this question.

- 2) If the answer is yes to the first question, the MPO’s committees should consider recommending a potential general location for the proposed bridge. The Policy Board can only recommend a general location since the complex engineering study needed for the construction of the project may identify issues with any precise location that may be identified.

Bridge Alternatives

WVDOH originally proposed three alternative bridge locations for consideration. **All three locations were estimated to be by WVDOH’s draft Study of the project to cost between \$64 million and \$71 million. At this level of study these costs are essentially the same for all alternatives.** A map showing the general locations of all three alternatives is attached. (Please note the maps are illustrative, final location would be determined through detailed study.) For the purposes of this preliminary evaluation all alternatives are proposed to be 40’ wide with 12’ lanes and 8 foot shoulders. Any constructed facility may differ slightly from this standard due to the requirements of the final design.

-Alternative 1-is a bridge crossing the Monongahela south of the Morgantown Lock on the Monongahela and north of the BFS gas station on Don Knotts Boulevard. This alternative would connect to River Road and include reconstruction of River Road.

-Alternative 2-This alternative would cross the Monongahela at Greenbag Road. **WVDOH and the MIP agreed to take this alternative off of the table due to the elevation of the proposed bridge and the impact to the MIP street network.** It is included in the attached documentation for informational purposes only.

-Alternative 3-This alternative would intersect with Don Knotts Blvd. north of Hazel’s House of Hope and connect to the southern portion of the MIP street network at Rail Street. This alternative would include an at grade intersection with Smithtown Road.

Traffic Impacts of the Alternatives

MPO staff prepared a preliminary evaluation of Alternatives 1 and 3 using the MPO’s regional travel demand model. This analysis provides an order of magnitude estimation of each alternative’s impact to the surrounding roadway network. It should be noted that this model does not take into account any potential changes to land use spurred by the enhanced access provided by the new bridge. The model is consistent with the growth projections used for the Harmony Grove IJR. Please see the attached stick diagram traffic maps for the overall estimation of each bridges impact on the traffic network.

Alternative 1: A review of the projections indicates that Alternative 1 would have the greatest impact on downtown Morgantown’s street network. The proposed bridge at this location would divert traffic from the south seeking to use the existing Westover bridge. The model shows that traffic on Don Knotts Blvd. south of the existing bridge would grow significantly from the existing approximately 16,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to over 22,000 vpd. This is not a particular concern for the area since the existing cross section of the Boulevard in this segment has enough capacity to handle the increased traffic volume now and the volumes projected for 2050.

Of some concern is that this alternative would significantly increase traffic on Dupont Road. If this alternative were implemented today the model estimates that volumes would increase from about 1,200 vpd to 4,400 vpd. In 2050 the volumes would increase from 3,800 vpd in the no build scenario to 8,200 vpd in the build scenario.

It should also be noted that this proposed bridge is in the approximate location evaluated for a new bridge as part of the MPO's 2018 Morgantown Industrial Park Access Study. While neither the MPO in 2018 nor WVDOH now propose that any structure would take any property outside the existing Don Knotts Blvd. right of way the proposal to locate a bridge at this location did raise objections from the residents of the City of Morgantown's First Ward.

-Alternative 3-This alternative primarily benefits the residents of Monongalia County and Preston County south of Greenbag Road and the MIP. The model anticipates that the impact to Smithtown Road would be negligible. The model estimates a small impact on the Westover Bridge and the downtown Morgantown Street network.

Pros and Cons of Each Alternative

WVDOH's feasibility study analyzed the "Pros and Cons" of each alternative. Below are the issues for Alternatives 1 and 3 identified by this Study. (Note staff has slightly modified the language from the report for readability-staff took all care not to change the meaning.)

Alternative 1:

Pros-

- Mitigates impact to River Road
- Potential to be constructed in phases
- Provides separation of industrial/through traffic and residential traffic
- Shorter and smaller bridge
- Improves school intersection and overall connectivity
- Provides best overall impact to the existing Bartolo Bridge
- Traffic and safety improvements with grade separated connection to US 119
- Grade separation aligns with 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan controlled access for US 119
- Potential to address White Park access (with pedestrian bridge)
- New roadway would meet MPO urban standard
- Turn lanes on bridge unlikely

Cons-

- Potential opposition from residents of First Ward
- Most earthwork
- Closest to Morgantown Lock
- Bridge construction more likely to interfere with channel navigation
- Most traffic control required during construction
- Two structures required
- Ramps for grade separation requires retaining walls
- Least direct connection for Mountain Top Beverage to I-68
- Approximately 8% slope on bridge
- Requires most redesign of adjacent intersections
- More geotechnical issues

Alternative 3

Pros-

- No structure takes required
- Alternative access to Smithtown Road avoids problematic intersection

Improved travel time to developments using Smithtown Road
Most direct connection to I-68 for Mountaintop Beverage
Suitable area on western side of river for bridge constructability

Alternative 3 (continued)

Cons-

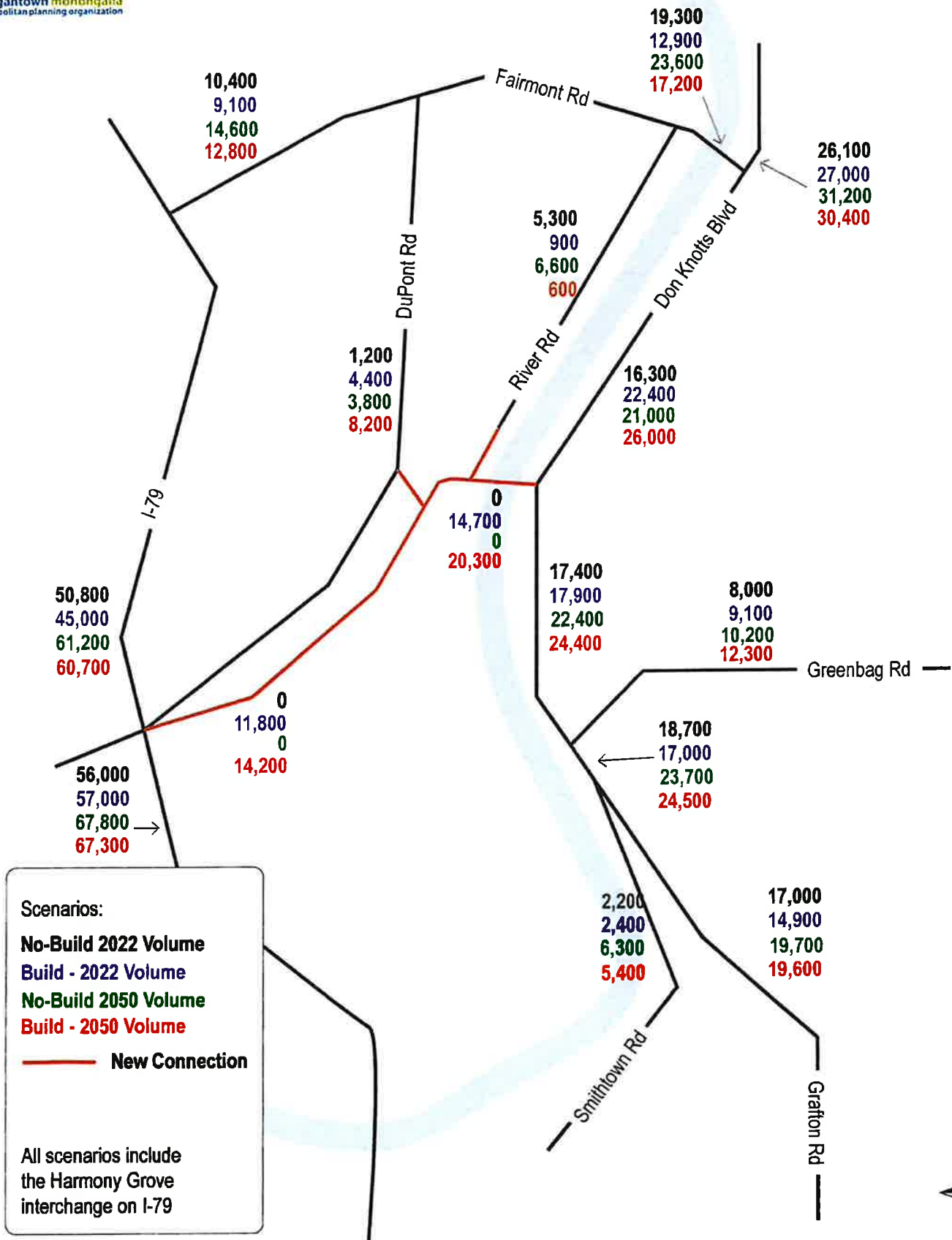
Adds at grade intersection for area MMMPO has identified for widening
Limited benefits for local network beyond Smithtown Road
Redundant with I-79 and I-68 after Harmony Grove Interchange is completed
May require turn lanes on bridge
Long and tall bridge
Crossing FERC gas line
Relies on using existing industrial park access roads
Widen US 119 for turn lanes

Conclusion

This memorandum has sought to summarize information prepared by WVDOH's consultant's and MMMPO Staff concerning a proposed "southern bridge" in an accessible manner for the MMMPO's committees. It is respectfully requested that the MPO's Committees make a recommendation on this item to the Policy Board.



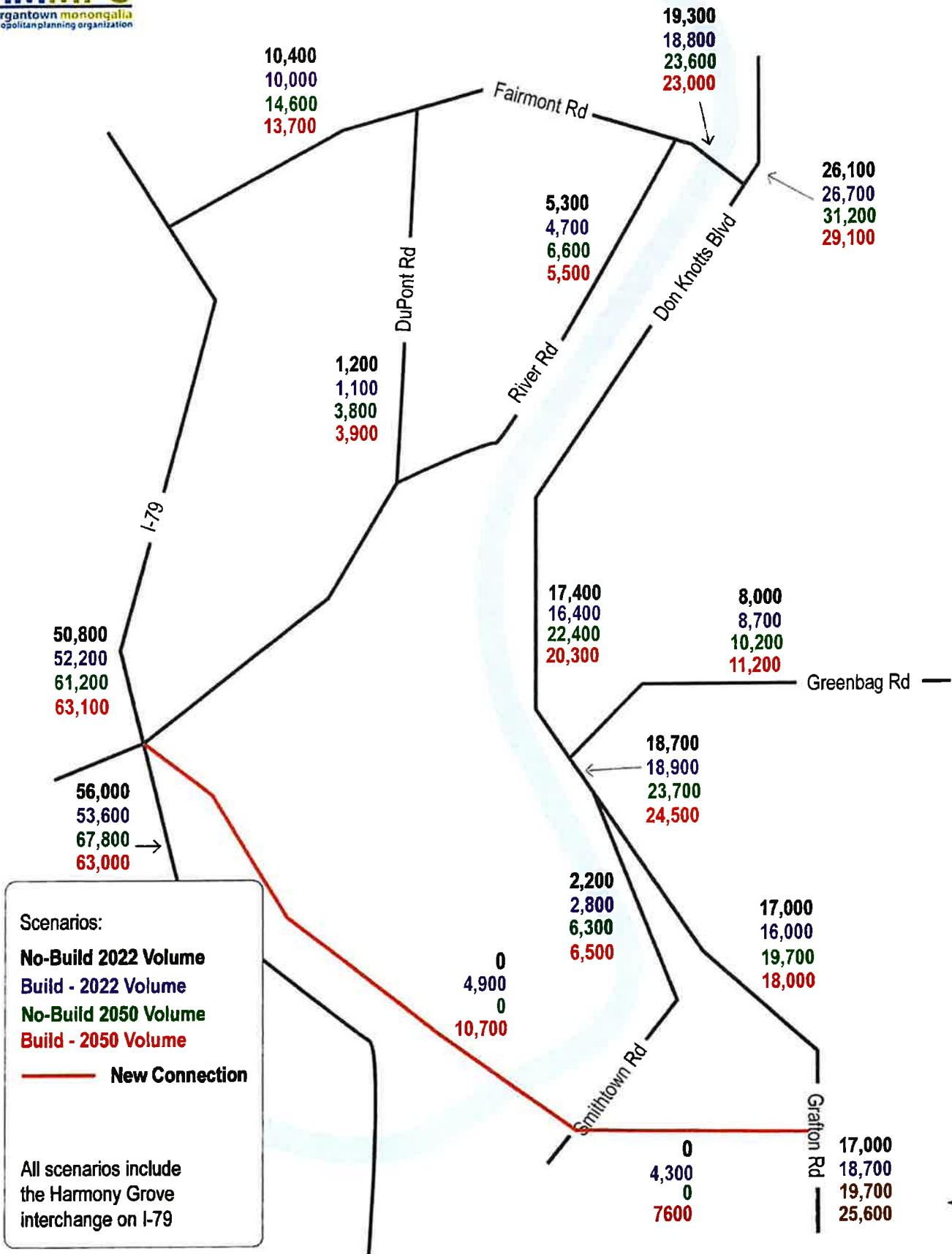
Preliminary Bridge Evaluation Summary - ALT 1



Not drawn to scale



Preliminary Bridge Evaluation Summary - ALT 3



Not drawn to scale

WVGES All Mining Map

