



POLICY BOARD MEETING

Monongalia Board of Education
1751 Earl L. Core Road. Morgantown. WV. 26505

June 15th, 2023, 6 PM

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Joe Abu-Ghannam - City of Morgantown, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Jeffrey Arnett – Monongalia County, Steve Blinco – Star City, Dave Bruffy – Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Bil Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Delegate Joe Statler – Blacksville, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Mayor Jennifer Selin – City of Morgantown

Others Present:

Glenn Adrian – Enrout Prop. (MIP)

MPO Director: Bill Austin, AICP

1. Call to Order

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

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Austin noted there was a quorum at the last CAC meeting. They recommended the adoption of the TIP Amendments and the Downtown Microsimulation Study.

b. Finance Committee

Mayor Lewis was not able to attend the meeting. Mr. Austin noted her finance report was included in the agenda. The beginning balance was \$97,821.66, with one deposit of \$20,475.33, and 19 disbursements totaling \$20,898.39. The final balance was \$97,398.54.

Mr. Kawecki moved to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Mayor Lucci. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin noted that he and Chairman Kelly met with the Dominion Post and had a good conversation about the MPO and projects around the county. Mr. Austin also attended the Smithtown Road Design Study Meeting where the DOH was developing the scope of work for the project. He also attended the State Safety Plan Steering Committee Implementation Meeting. Mr. Austin said he mentioned keeping Brookhaven Road moving forward at this meeting.

5. Update on Harmony Grove Interchange-Glenn Adrian

Glen Adrian provided an update on the Harmony Grove interchange process. Interstate Justification Report and NEPA reports are required as part of this process and are moving forward. They were submitted to the DOH, who modified the reports, and then submitted them to the Federal Highway Administration. The FHA suggested adding 10 years to the original plan due to delays in approval, taking the project timeline from 2020-2040 to 2020-2050. Working with their consultants, HDR, and consultants from the MPO, they were able to speed up the process. Currently the data has been revised and engineers are working on putting it in the IJR with hopes of resubmitting it to the DOH, then to the FHA promptly. The FHA has 30 days to review document, propose questions, and potentially approve it.

Mr. Statler asked about signage for trucks to not go up the hill past the schools. Mr. Adrian confirmed new signage will be installed within 30 days to help override the GPS telling them to go through on the Upper River Road. Commissioner Bloom thanked Mr. Adrian for installing the signs to help reduce traffic on the Upper River Road.

6. Update on Exit 155 Modification

Megan O'Reilly provided an update on the Exit 155 Modification. This has been broken up into two phases. She noted that Phase I of construction should begin within a year. West Ridge, along with the county and WVDOH have been working together to keep the process moving.

Mr. Justice asked about how the traffic will be reconfigured as cars exit the interstate. Ms. O'Reilly clarified this will be addressed in Phase 2.

Councilperson Kawecki asked about a timeline for the project. Ms. O'Reilly said design for Phase 1 should be in the next few weeks. Construction within a year. The timeline for Phase 2 will be determined once Phase 1 begins.

Mr. Statler raised concern about traffic backing up, and he suggested putting up temporary sticks or temporarily painting lines to aid with traffic flow. She stated she will relay this message.

Commissioner Bloom suggested that if everyone agrees verbally, to ask Mr. Austin to pass along concerns brought up by Mr. Statler. Everyone verbally agreed.

7. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and Adjustments

Mr. Austin noted a TIP Amendment for the Mountain Line Transit Authority was left out. It has been duly advertised in the newspaper and on the MPO's website. Mr. Bruffy noted it included 4 different funding sources.

Mr. Austin then discussed the proposed TIP Amendments and Administrative changes to the MPO's TIP under the MPO's recently adopted policy. The TTAC and CAC both recommend passing this 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. Austin noted the MPO is asking the DOH for better locational information, including a map for their TIP Amendments.

There were two motions to approve; one for Mountain Line and one for the Highway TIP Amendment.

Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the Mountain Line TIP Amendment seconded by Mr. Statler. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Selin moved to approve the Highway TIP Amendment seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

8. 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. Austin noted that Mr. Gatlin raised a concern about the language including pedestrian safety in the TTAC meeting. The language will be adjusted to address this. Data collection is projected to begin in October when students are back in town. The TTAC and CAC both recommend passing this policy. If the Policy Board accepts this, the MPO will enter into a contract with the DOH for them to enter the contract with Kimley Horn to complete the work.

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the Downtown Microsimulation Study Scope of Work seconded by Mr. Bruffy.

Commissioner Sikora asked about the list of ‘studies’ being done. Mr. Austin clarified the software being used will combine many studies and simulate how traffic would flow in Downtown Morgantown. It provides delay statistics, you can experiment with eliminating one-way streets, etc. There are many forms of analysis. Mr. Austin noted this is working on a minute-to-minute scale compared to the Regional Travel Demand model; this is a very focused project.

Councilperson Kawecky asked about the time frame. Mr. Austin noted that while we have data, there will be another data collection event in October. Once data is collected the Steering Committee will look at the preliminary report around the timeline frame of March-May. Mr. Austin said in about a year the Policy Board may be presented with alternatives, and they can begin discussion on which is best. He clarified a more walkable downtown may be a preferred outcome.

Mr. Justice mentioned some of the streets around WVU technically have right of way to create two-way traffic. He asked if the model could demonstrate this two-way traffic, even though it is parking currently. Mr. Austin clarified the study can do this.

Mayor Selin noted that downtown traffic is congested, and this model would be great to find alternatives to help. She suggested an automatic pedestrian phase with signals.

With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

9. Appointment of Auditor Selection Committee

Mr. Austin noted the MPO needs an Auditor Selection Committee of at least three individuals. Mr. Austin and Mayor Lewis had already volunteered themselves for the Committee, and Mr. Austin suggested another Policy Board member volunteer. Commissioner Sikora volunteered.

10. Old Business

a. Suballocation Project Selection Policy

Mr. Austin noted this Policy was submitted to the Board in the May meeting. The Board requested more time for review. Meetings were held for questions and comments. Mr. Austin called the two Board members who had concerns, and the concerns were addressed in the new draft.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the Suballocation Project Selection Policy, seconded by Mr. Statler.

Mr. Statler thanked Mr. Austin and Staff for listening to his concerns.

With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

11. Other Business

Mr. Blinco raised concern about excessive grass and weeds in the community. He mentioned sidewalks, sides of roads, etc., look terrible and can cause safety issues. Mr. Blinco asked Mr.

Austin what can be done. He said there is not much they can do unless a tree or bush is blocking a view, and this can be reported to the DOH as a safety concern. Mr. Austin also suggested working with a Clean Communities Campaign to encourage cleaning up grass and weeds for safety.

12. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.