CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. 1 The Long Range Transportation Plan

This Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) document summarizes the planning process, data, technical analysis, and recommended transportation strategies, programs, and construction projects to support transportation goals and objectives in the Morgantown-Monongalia County region. This document includes the following chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Regional Vision
3. Transportation Goals and Objectives
4. Existing Transportation System
5. Regional Growth Forecasts
6. Transportation Demand Model Development
7. Multimodal Alternatives Analysis
8. Funding the Long Range Transportation Plan
9. Projects and Strategies
10. System Management
11. Transportation System Security
12. Innovative Funding Strategies
13. Environmental Justice Analysis

This Plan has been prepared as required by federal regulations including the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAA) of 1990, Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

On July 6, 2012, near the end of the formal planning process for this plan, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) became law. MAP-21 authorizes federal surface transportation programs through the end of the federal fiscal year 2014. While this Plan has been prepared to be consistent with the new law, specific federal rulemaking related to metropolitan plans (like this plan) has not been issued at the time of this writing. Specific guidance on MAP-21 could affect the implementation of this Plan.
The preparation of this plan is part of an ongoing planning process by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as required in the U.S. Code of Regulations:

“…each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) and foster economic growth and development, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution…”

1.2 Purpose of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP serves as a guide for planning and improving the transportation system in support and promotion of a future vision for the region. It will be the basis for the MPO’s ongoing planning efforts, pursuit of improvement projects, programs, and policy development by the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) for the next five years. The LRTP is based on a vision for the future of the region in 2040. This plan is an update to the Greater Morgantown Regional Transportation Plan adopted in March of 2007. The next update of the LRTP will be in 2018, and will be based on how the needs and goals of the region will have changed since the adoption of this Plan.

1.3 The Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO)

The MMMPO was established in June 2003 as the regional agency responsible for administering the continuing, coordinated, and comprehensive transportation planning process in Monongalia County. The MMMPO coverage area is displayed in Figure 1-1.

MPOs are federally required transportation planning bodies. MPOs are comprised of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments and agencies having interest or responsibility for transportation planning and programming within an urbanized area. An MPO is responsible for the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for its metropolitan
planning area. The adoption of these documents is a prerequisite for the receipt of both federal transit and federal highway funding. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) mandate that each urbanized area with a base population of 50,000 or more must have an organized planning process that results in a transportation plan that addresses the planned development for the area.

The core functions of an MPO are:

**Establish a setting:** Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.

**Evaluate alternatives:** Evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region, to the nature of its transportation issues, and to the realistically available options. (These evaluations are included in the Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP).

**Maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** At least every five years, develop and update a Long Range Transportation Plan for the metropolitan area covering a planning horizon of at least twenty years. The LRTP should foster (1) mobility and access for people and goods, (2) efficient system performance and preservation, and (3) quality of life.

**Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** At least every four years, the MPO must develop a project implementation program based on the LRTP and designed to serve the area’s goals, using spending, regulating, operating, management, and financial tools. The TIP period is required to extend four years into the future.

**Involve the public:** Involve the general public and all the significantly affected subgroups in the four essential functions listed above.

Source: *The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues*, a Publication of the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, FHWA, FTA.
MMMPO Structure

The MMMPO is comprised of the following committees:

- The MPO Policy Board
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)
- Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

MMMPO Policy Board

The MMMPO Policy Board provides overall direction to the MPO as well as providing an open forum for transportation decision-making. Voting members of the Policy Board are primarily elected officials from the incorporated communities in the County, the County Commission, and representatives of other agencies in the County including the Monongalia County Board of Education, West Virginia University (WVU) and the Mountain Line Transit Authority. A representative of the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) also is a voting member of the Policy Board. The Policy Board meets bi-monthly to discuss issues and review and approve major planning reports, documents, and activities. The Policy Board adopts and considers modifications to the LRTP, the UPWP, and the TIP.

Representation on the MMMPO Policy Board is listed below:

- Three county commissioners representing Monongalia County
- Three elected officials representing the City of Morgantown
- One elected official representing the City of Westover
- One elected official representing the Town of Star City
- One elected official representing the Town of Granville
- One elected official representing the Town of Blacksville
- One elected representative of the Monongalia County Board of Education
- One appointed official from the Mountain Line Transit Authority
- One representative from WVDOT
- One representative from WVU
Figure 1-1. MMMPO Coverage Area
Advisory Committees

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) also meet bimonthly and are responsible for providing advice to MPO staff and to the MPO Policy Board regarding planning reports, documents, activities, and proposed modifications to the LRTP and TIP. TTAC members are appointed by the agency or municipality they represent.

The following agencies may be represented on the TTAC:

■ City of Morgantown Planning Department
■ City of Morgantown Engineering Department
■ Monongalia County Planning Department
■ Monongalia County Economic Development
■ WVDOT
■ FHWA
■ Mountain Line Transit Authority
■ Morgantown Utility Board
■ Harley O. Staggers National Transportation Center at WVU

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is a standing MPO committee. A single individual representing the following interests can be appointed to the CAC by the Policy Board representative(s) of their agency.

CAC representatives may come from the following agencies:

■ Mountain Line Transit Authority
■ WVDOT
■ WVU
■ The various municipalities in the Urban Area
■ Monongalia County Commission
■ Monongalia County Board of Education
■ Resident Associations
■ Local Commercial Associations
■ Emergency Service Organizations
The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of leaders from across the community who are periodically asked to advise the Policy Board on regional issues.

PAC members come from diverse organizations including those listed below:

- Monongalia County Development Authority
- Morgantown Area Economic Partnership
- Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce
- FHWA
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Office of the Governor of West Virginia
- Major employers in the area

1.4 LRTP Development Process

The development of this Plan entails the first four boxes in the following illustration of an MPO’s continuing transportation planning process:
The public process for the development of this plan included a comprehensive regional visioning process (to be discussed in the next chapter). It also included an extensive stakeholder and public participation process that involved the MPO Policy Board, all standing committees of the MPO, other stakeholders in the region, and the general public. A formal and consistent group of representatives was assembled to guide the Plan development. This group included the MPO’s Policy Board, Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), and Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC). This group was referred to as the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) and was heavily engaged throughout the development of the Plan, as illustrated in Figure 1-3. The TAG will be described in subsequent chapters.

**Key Process Elements**

Key elements of the process include:

**Establish a Regional Vision** – A vision for the future of the region was articulated through a series of public involvement meetings, and interviews and meetings with local leaders and stakeholders. The vision
paints a picture of how the region desires its land use and transportation system to evolve over the next 20+ years.

**Establish Transportation Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Measures** – Based on regional goals and objectives expressed in the regional visioning process, and additional input from the TAG, a set of transportation-specific goals and objectives was developed. This included identification of items that should be measured to gauge progress toward those objectives.

**Assess Current Conditions** – Strengths, weaknesses, problems, and deficiencies in the region’s transportation system were identified through review of data, previous studies, technical analysis, and input from stakeholders and the general public.

**Forecast Future Conditions** – Forecasts of future population, housing, employment, travel demand, and transportation funding levels were developed. Assessments of the future implications of those forecasts were made.

**Evaluate Transportation Alternatives** – With major involvement from the TAG, and in consideration of the input received from the public during the regional visioning process, numerous potential transportation improvement projects and strategies were developed and assessed. The projects and strategies support and promote the regional vision, and address current and future needs in the system. Items such as the potential effectiveness, cost, feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages for each concept were evaluated. The concepts considered also included those from the 2007 LRTP in addition to newly developed concepts.

**Develop the Draft Recommended Plan** – Based on these steps, a draft plan that recommended transportation improvement projects and regional transportation strategies was developed and presented to the TAG for a final review. The revised draft was then presented to the general public to ensure that it supports the vision, goals, and objectives for the region that were expressed during the regional visioning process. Then, with consideration of the public comments, the LRTP was finalized.
1.5 Involving the Public and Stakeholders

The following graphic illustrates the LRTP process timeline and the extensive stakeholder and public outreach program implemented for development of this plan.

Figure 1-3. LRTP Process and Public/Stakeholder Involvement