

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
AUGUST 15, 2019 MINUTES

Members Present:

Chairperson Jennifer Selin, Vice Chairman Joe Statler, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson David Harshbarger-City of Morgantown, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover, Ron Justice-West Virginia University, Bill Kawecki-Mayor of Morgantown, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County

MPO Director: Bill Austin

Members Absent:

Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Dominick Claudio-Star City

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairperson Jennifer Selin called the Policy Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment Period

Robert Morgano, a resident of 450 Cypress Street, noted that he is against the project at the intersection of University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd. He noted that the project will install a roundabout at the intersection and convert Baldwin St into a one-way street. He noted that the proposed changes will have negative impact to both drivers and pedestrians. It will also landlock the residents living on Baldwin St.

Kimberly Keener, a resident of 324 Baldwin St, expressed her opposition to the proposed changes of intersection improvement project at University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd. She noted that the public outreach of this project was not sufficient. Most of the residents living in the intersection area are against this project as proposed. Mr. Keener requested the DOH to reconsider the design of this project.

Chris Doyle, a resident of 325 Baldwin St, expressed his opposition to the project at the intersection of University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd. He noted that the proposed roundabout won't be adequate to handle the traffic in the neighborhood.

Glenn Mullenax, a resident of 1053 Tacoma St, noted that he is against the proposed changes at the intersection of University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd. He read a statement prepared by the residents living in the neighborhood, opposing the project.

Marie Pettit, a resident of 380 Elmhurst Street, expressed her opposition to the proposed changes at the intersection of University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd. She noted that the change will increase traffic in the neighborhood, making the street less safe for the children attending the Suncrest Middle School.

Bath McLaughlin, a resident of 3136 Krepps Street, noted that converting Baldwin Street to one way will impose more traffic on Krepps Street, especially during school pick up and drop off hours. It will make it less safe for the students walking to the school. It will also make the street less safe for children playing in the front yard of their house.

Deborah Herget, a resident of 1322 Kingwood Pike, expressed his opposition to the proposed two roundabouts on Greenbag Rd. She noted that the roundabouts are unnecessary and the DOH should focus more on fixing existing roads, rather than building new facilities. Mrs. Herget then noted that constructions on Greenbag Rd will cause considerable inconvenience to the residents living in the Kingwood Pike area. She noted that adding one-left turn lane at the intersection of Greenbag Rd and Kingwood Pick will largely solve traffic problems in that location.

Ted Hastings, a resident of 87 Kingwood Pike, expressed his opposition to the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Greenbag Rd and Kingwood Pike. He noted that the engineering firm for this project did not take into account local community interests, and the proposed changes will cost much more than what is necessary to fix the problem at that intersection.

Jenifer Hastings, a resident of 87 Kingwood Pike, expressed his opposition to the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Greenbag Rd and Kingwood Pike. She noted that the DOH should adopt an alternative which is more cost-effective and brings less negative impact to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Bloom requested that the Board suspend the meeting procedure so he could bring up a topic which is not on the meeting's agenda. Chairperson Selin suspended the rule.

Commissioner Bloom asked Mr. Austin about the status of the project at the University Ave and Collins Ferry Rd intersection. Mr. Austin noted that the project initially proposed a one-way street on Baldwin St, but he was recently informed by DOH staff that the proposal had been changed, and Baldwin Street will continue to function as a two-way street. The right-of-way acquisition map from the DOH might incorrectly showed the one-way street proposal to the neighborhood. Mr. Austin noted that he will further confirm with the DOH on this issue.

Chairperson Selin noted that it is important for the local community to get precise information about projects affecting their neighborhoods.

3. Approval of Minutes

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

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Rice, the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, noted that the MPO has two advisory committees. The Citizens Advisory Committee provides a venue for the community to provide input on transportation projects and programs in this area. Mr. Rice noted that the CAC recommended approval on the TIP amendments, the proposed shared employment positions, and the consultant selection for the transit study.

b. Finance Report

Mayor Lewis presented the Finance Report for June and July as the following:

-- Beginning balance in June \$26,629.29 with expenditures of \$24,880.21 and one deposit of \$15,000.00, leaving a balance of \$16,749.08 at the beginning of July.

-- Beginning balance in July \$16,749.08 with expenditures of \$67,436.64 and three deposits of \$73,191.42 leaving a balance of \$22,503.86 at the beginning of August.

Commissioner Bloom moved to accept the Finance Report as presented; seconded by Mayor Kawecki. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff and board members have met the WV Secretary of Transportation and DOH staff in Charleston a few weeks ago. The meeting successfully resolved the issues concerning the Van Voorhis Rd project and the Beechurst Ave project. The two projects are moving forward with corrected scopes of work. Mr. Austin noted that the WV Association of MPOs has met DOH administrators and engineers to discuss performance measures, funding allocations, and prioritization of projects. Mr. Austin also noted that he attended a FHWA meeting on performance measures in Washington D.C. It is expected that the MPO will allocate more staff time on tasks relating to performance measurement.

4. Presentation on Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan Status-Phil Goff Alta Planning

Phil Goff, the project manager of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan, did a presentation about the pedestrian and bicycle plan. Mr. Goff briefed the Policy Board on the status of the study process and described the proposed recommendations to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the areas.

Mayor Kawecki asked about the deliverables of the study. Mr. Goff noted that the study will provide a set of recommendations on facilities and policies to improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation in this area. It will also provide a capital improvement plan, information on funding resources, and design guidelines. Mr. Goff noted that the study team will hold a public meeting in October to introduce preliminary recommendations to the community. Mr. Austin noted that the study areas also include Granville, Star City, and un-incorporated areas in Monongalia County.

5. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

Mr. Austin noted that the West Virginia University Parking and Transportation has requested a TIP Amendment. The amendment is to allocate unspent funds to perform needed maintenance on the system, including closed circuit TV and an HVAC upgrade. Mr. Austin then noted that the WV DOH has requested TIP Amendments for the following projects: the CR 45 River Road Slide Repair Project, the Dunkard Ave Sidewalks Project, and the Caperton Trail Lighting.

Commissioner Bloom noted that there are two slides on River Road. He asked which one of them will be addressed by the project in the amendment. Mr. Austin noted that the project will fix the slide on the northern segment of the River Road.

Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the TIP amendments as presented, seconded by Mr. Justice. With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

6. MPO/Monongalia County Shared Employee

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is working with the County to hire a shared employee to improve the MPO's public outreach and to assist the County and the MPO with working with walk-in customers. The initial recommendation is that the shared position will be managed by the MPO, but the County has also expressed an interest in hosting the position. If MPO host the position, the employer will cost marginally less than being managed by the County due to lower health insurance cost. It will also make position easier to expend to a full-time employer when needed. Mr. Austin noted that the position will help to strengthen the connection between land use planning and transportation planning in the area.

He noted that the MPO staff is comfortable with the position being based with the County or the MPO. Mr. Kelly noted that he believed the Policy Board would be comfortable with either option negotiated with the County Commission by Mr. Austin.

7. Mountain Line Transit Study Consultant Selection

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is acting as the contractual agent for the Mountain Line Short to Medium Range Transit Study, which is funded in part by MPO Federal Transportation Planning funds, Federal funds provided by WV DOH, and Mountain Line. The MPO received 7 responses to the Request of Qualification for the study. All

proposals were submitted by qualified consultants. A selection committee was established, which consisted of 2 representatives of WVU, a representative of the City of Morgantown, a representative of WV DOH, two representatives of the Mountain Line and an MPO staff member. The Committee interviewed three firms and selected HDR as the recommended consultant for the study.

Mr. Austin asked that the Policy Board authorize the Chairman to enter into the contract with HDR if the contract scope of work is approved by the Mountain Line Board.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the consultant selection and authorize the MPO's Chairperson and Executive Director to sign off the contract if it is satisfactory to the Mountain Line Board; seconded by Mr. Bruffy. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

8. Discussion of Greenbag Road Project

Commissioner Bloom asked if any policy board member could request an agenda item for the meeting. Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO has always operated in that way.

Commissioner Bloom noted that the DOH has made changes to the Greenbag Rd project and he is concerned that the MPO planning process was undermined because of a recent meeting between some MPO board members and DOH staff in Charleston. He also expressed his discontent on how the information about Greenbag Rd was communicated to the community. Commissioner Bloom distributed a copy of emails between him and the MPO's Executive Director about this issue.

Commissioner Sikora noted that the County has been working with the DOH on the Greenbag Rd project, and he is surprised by the changes to this project. He pointed out the importance of the integrity of planning process and a unified voice of this region when communicating with the DOH.

Chairperson Selin noted that the meeting in Charleston solved the issues of the Beechurst Ave project and the Van Voorhis Rd project. The MPO board members received the information on the status of Greenbag Rd project from DOH staff after the meeting.

Mayor Kawecki noted that the meeting was successful in solving many community concerns and it did not undermine the MPO's planning process. The information about the changes to Greenbag Rd project was provided to him, and it is appropriate to pass that information to the community.

Mr. Carr noted that DOH staff briefed the MPO's representatives about the Greenbag Rd project after the meeting. He noted that misinformation is a reoccurring issue statewide. The DOH is working to improve the process on how project information is distributed from Charleston to local communities.

Mr. Austin noted that the West Virginia Association of MPOs is working with the DOH to improve the project programming and prioritization process. He noted that an open and transparent process will be beneficial for the DOH and local communities and help to avoid these issues.

9. Other Business

No other business.

11. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.