

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
MAY 17, 2018 MINUTES

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Vice Chairman Bill Kawecki-Mayor of Morgantown, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Ron Justice-WVU, Councilperson Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County,

MPO Director: Bill Austin

Members Absent:

Dominick Claudio-Star City, Councilperson Ryan Wallace -City of Morgantown, Delegate Joe Statler-Blacksville

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Kelly called the Policy Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment Period

No public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Kelly 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. Bill Rice, the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, noted that he was not able to attend the meeting last week. He noted that the CAC had a quorum and recommended approval of action items to the Policy Board. Mr. Rice further noted that the CAC has a tradition of supporting pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. The CAC will continue pushing the envelope for creating a walking and cycling friendly community. Mr. Rice then commended the working group meeting last night. The meeting was focused on pedestrian safety and facility deficiency in the area. Chairman Kelly agreed and noted that it is encouraging that different groups and stakeholders are committed to speak with one voice on transportation issues in the area.

b. Finance Report

Mayor Lewis presented the Finance Report for March and April as the following:

-- Beginning balance in March \$8,704.52 with expenditures of \$25,136.08 and one deposit of \$ 37,404.43, leaving a balance of \$20,972.87 at the beginning of April.

-- Beginning balance in April \$20,972.87 with expenditures of \$23559.76 and one deposit of \$22,499.11, leaving a balance of \$19,912.22 at the beginning of May.

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 expressed his appreciation to the WV DOH. DOH has processed all the reimbursements to the MPO in a very timely manner. Mr. Austin then noted that the MPO staff will attend a training session in the middle of June place in Charleston, WV. The training is hosted by the WV DOH, focusing on MPO operations and the transportation planning process.

Mr. Austin noted that DOH will hold a meeting to discuss DOH's future construction projects in the area. The meeting will be held on May 24th, in Mountain Line training room. Mayor Kawecki asked about the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Austin noted that it is to introduce the role of local agencies in transportation and to discuss major upcoming construction projects in the area.

Mr. Austin noted that he will take vacation in the first week of July.

5. TIP Adoption

Mr. Austin noted that the draft 2018-2023 Urban Area Transportation Improvement Program is enclosed in the meeting's agenda package. The document has been updated to include the projects completed in the last 5 years, and a separate list of projects programmed and obligated but not completed in the last year. The draft TIP was released for public review in both electronic forms and hard copies on April 4th to meet the requirements of the MPO's public participation plan. No comment was received from the public.

Mr. Justice moved to adopt the TIP as presented, seconded by Mayor Kawecki. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

6. Memorandums of Understanding with Transit Agencies and WVDOT

Mr. Austin noted that the most recent Federal transportation legislation MAP 21 and the FAST Act require the State's, transit agencies, and MPO's, to develop performance measures to help ensure that the investments in transportation are meeting national, state, and local goals. To meet this requirement, the MPO is required to enter into agreements with WVDOT and the area's transit agencies on performance measures. These agreements spell out the MPO's responsibilities and responsible agencies to include performance measurement including those measures that are the responsibility of the area's transit agencies, in the urban area's Prospectus which defines the tasks in the Unified Planning Work Program. The MPO will also enter into agreements with the area's transit agencies identifying their responsibilities and agreeing to define these work tasks in the MPO's Prospectus.

Commissioner Bloom moved to authorize the Executive Director execute both the memorandums as presented, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

7. MPO Travel Policy

Recent concerns with travel by personnel in other agencies has led to WVDOH recommending that the MMMPO have a more well defined travel policy. The MPO's current travel policy is a statement in the MPO's personnel policy that the Executive Director should keep the Policy Board notified of proposed travel. The attached Travel Policy more clearly defines the Executive Director's responsibilities for keeping the Board apprised of proposed travel. The attached draft policy outlines the type of expenses that are eligible for payment by the MPO and when the Policy Board should be notified of travel by MPO staff.

Commissioner Sikora noted that in the future the MPO can improve the travel policy by making it more universal and adding more specific provisions. Councilperson Selin suggest that the Policy Board review and modify the policy in event of any sensible suggestions in the future. Councilperson Selin move to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

8. Update on Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is working with a pedestrian safety working group established in conjunction with WVDOH District 4, WVU, the City of Morgantown, the MPO, and a collection of stakeholders including WVU students, Monongalia County, LTAP (including Dr. Ron Eck), and others. The group tentatively decided that the MPO should expand the original scope of work for the Pedestrian Safety Update to conduct a comprehensive review of the area's pedestrian needs using a consultant recognized for their expertise in pedestrian access. The Bicycle Board is willing to join into this effort to create a joint non-motorized transportation plan for the area.

Mayor Kawecki noted that the plan should coordinate with the greater urban area, including Granville, Westover, and Star City. He then asked how the MPO can address immediate concerns raised from recently pedestrian related crashes. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is working the WV DOH to develop several pilot projects to improve pedestrian safety on Patteson Dr.

Mr. Bruffy noted that the plan should use a holistic approach to address the issue of pedestrian access to transit service. Better pedestrian access to transit stops and shelters will help the Mountain Line improve its operational efficiency by limiting flag stops at certain locations.

Councilperson Selin asked if the MPO has any information about the WV DOH's on-call consultants with the expertise in pedestrian/bicycle planning. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO staff currently does not have that information. The MPO will work closely with the DOH in the consultant selection process.

9. Access Study for Morgantown Industrial Park

Mr. Austin noted that the Morgantown Industrial Park has approached the Monongalia County Commission and the City of Westover to discuss the need for better access to the Industrial Park. The purpose is to address the increased industrial traffic on DuPont Rd and emergency services access to the park. The County Commission and the City of Westover have asked MPO staff to study ways to improve access to the Industrial Park.

MPO staff proposed two options to proceed with the study. The first option is that the MPO staff conduct a planning level evaluation of potential alternatives to improve access to the park. MPO staff will use the MPO's travel demand model to perform the analysis. The evaluation will decide whether to include an industrial park I-79 access project in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. If included, the MPO will then hire consultants to perform more sophisticated analysis on the project to determine the optimal scope of the project and to prepare documentations required for interstate justification and federal environmental assessment.

The second option presented is to directly hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive study on the feasibility of the project. The consultant will assess the validity of the projects and, if valid, to prepare an interstate justification report required by the FHWA in event of requesting new access to the interstate highway system. Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff is asking that the Policy Board authorize staff to alter the Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2018-19 to address this issue.

Mr. Hawkins noted that the project will also impact the access to two public schools. He noted that project should be a high priority for the region. Mr. Carr noted that resources are limited to hire consultants and there is no guarantee that funding will be available for this study in the near future.

Mayor Kawecki asked about the impact to the MPO's operation, if the MPO conduct a study for the project in the next fiscal year. Mr. Austin noted that MPO will hire a consultant for a bicycle plan, which was originally scheduled as an in-house task. Because of that, MPO will free up staff hours and have adequate resource to perform the study. Conducting a planning level study for the project is within the capacity of the MPO.

Mr. Justice moved a motion that MPO staff conduct a planning level evaluation on the alternatives of improving access to the Morgantown Industrial Park to decide if the project be included in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

10. Other Business

Commissioner Bloom noted that he was approached by a property owner who expressed a concern about the Collins Ferry Rd and University Ave intersection project. The DOH adopted a design for the project which could have large impact to his property near the intersection. He noted that he was expressing this property owners concerns at his request, since he could not attend the meeting.

Commissioner Bloom then noted that the County Commissioners will meet with Don Williams, the DOH District Engineer, to discuss roadway repairing projects in the area, including the DuPont Rd project, the River Rd slide evaluation project, and the Mon Blvd slide project. He noted that there is a severe shortage of funding for road side slide controls for the area. The District is looking for additional resource to fund those projects. Commissioner Bloom noted that an option to acquire more funding for this region is to seek funding directly from the federal level.

Commissioner Bloom also noted that the DOH District 4 will hold a meeting in Fairmont on June 13, to discuss maintenance issues with local leaders and state legislators. The meeting will discuss a potential update to the funding formula that the DOH has been using since 1980s. Councilperson Selin noted that funding distribution formula should consider the current infrastructure condition condition, facility usages, and regional balance. Mr. Carr agreed and noted that the DOH is adapting performance measures as a tool to more effectively improve the statewide highway system. The recently approved transportation bonds will help the DOH fund many projects of regional significance and free up resources for roadway maintenance.

Mr. Bruffy noted that starting on June 1st, the Mountain Line will provide daily service to Wadestown, Monday through Friday. Beginning on August 6, the Mountain Line will operate its Westover facility as the central bus terminal. The Mountain Line will add three more bus routes and make changes on some existing routes. Mr. Bruffy encouraged the public go the Mountain Line's website or call their service information number to learn more about the service changes. Mr. Bruffy also noted that the Mountain Line will provide free service on all its routes during the first two weeks of the service change. Mayor Kawecki noted that the Mountain Line could contact the City's communication office to distribute the information to the community.

Mr. Rice noted that while it is important to address roadway maintenance issues, the primary role of the MPO is to manage the planning process to make the transportation system safe and efficient.

11. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM.