



POLICY BOARD MEETING

March 18, 2021

This meeting was held virtually on  
<https://cityofmorgantown.my.webex.com/meet/cityofmorgantown>

**Members Present:**

Chair-Commissioner Tom Bloom, Vice-Chair Ron Justice – WVU, Treasure-Mayor Patricia Lewis, Commissioner Jeffery Arnett-Monongalia County, Recorder Steven Blinco-Star City, David Bruffy – Mountain Line Transit, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Bill Kawecki-City of Morgantown, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County

**Members Absent**

Dave Harshbarger, Joe Statler,

**MPO Director:** Bill Austin, AICP

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**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Austin noted that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Policy Board meeting was held as a teleconference. The phone number and web address to access the teleconference were publicized.

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

**2. Public Comment**

No Public Comments.

**3. Committee Report**

*a. Citizens Advisory Committee*

Mr. Austin noted that Chairman Abildso of the Citizens Advisory Committee is not able to attend this meeting due to a schedule conflict. Mr. Austin reported that the CAC has recommended approval of the agenda items presented to the committee, including the TIP amendment request, the Unified Planning Work Program, the scope of work for Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update, the Performance Measures, the Mountain Line Transit Study, and the Don Knott's Blvd Crash Report.

*b. Finance Report*

Mayor Lewis briefed the Board on the financial report as the following:

At the beginning of January, the balance was \$21,462.04. In January, the expenditure was \$29,967.79, with two deposits totaling \$46,964.60, leaving a balance of \$38,458.85 at the end of January.

At the beginning of February, the balance was \$38,458.85. In February, the expenditure was \$28,294.00, with two deposits totaling \$4,536.92, leaving a balance of \$14,701.77 at the end of February.

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Recorder Blinco. With no discussion, the motion was approved.

*c. Executive Director's Report*

Mr. Austin noted that he re-inherited the Chairman of the West Virginia Association of MPOs. The MPO's quarterly newsletter has been released to the public. The MPO staff has been working with consultant on the Industrial Park interchange project.

Mr. Austin noted that he will take a short vacation in the second week of April.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Bloom noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda packet. Mr. Kelly moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no further discussion, the motion was approved.

**5. TIP Amendments**

Mr. Austin noted that the DOH has proposed amendments to the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program. The amendments will remove some bridge projects to a bridge bundle program developed by the DOH and now included in a BUILD grant from the FHWA. Those bridge projects include the Westover Bridge project, Uffington I/C +1 project, the I-68 SB Ramp Bridge project, and USAC Daniel Mehringer Memorial Bridge NB & SB project. In addition, the DOH requested deletion of Beechurst Ave at 6TH (GO BOND 4). The project is to be merged with the University Ave- Campus Dr project. The DOH also requested adjustment on the funding for the Van Voorhis Rd project and University Ave- Campus Dr project.

Mr. Carr noted that DOH is finalizing the bridge bundle program which will include 19 bridges in the area. The bundle will help the DOH address performance measurement.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the TIP amendments as presented; seconded by Mr. Carr. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

**6. FY 2021-2022 UPWP**

Mr. Austin noted that the draft FY 2021-2022 UPWP is included in the agenda package. Mr. Austin noted that the UPWP includes a request for \$200,000 (80% Federal, 10% State, 10% Local) in additional funding for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update, a 2.75% cost of living increase for MPO staff, and two work items for Mountain Line Transit. The work items for Mountain Line are a review of selected intersections where Mountain Line vehicles have to make left turns to identify any operational improvements that could facilitate the movement and improve safety, and a review of Mountain Line data

to identifying locations heavily used by Mountain Line passengers that could use the sidewalk and or bus shelter improvement.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the UPWP as presented; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

## **7. Scope of Work for Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update**

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff is finalizing the contract with the consulting firm for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. The draft scope of work for the update is included in the agenda package. The scope includes an extensive public involvement process, an update of the regional travel demand model, and the creation of a fiscally constrained transportation plan. The work for the MTP update is to be performed in conjunction with the preparation of comprehensive plans for Monongalia County, the City of Morgantown, Star City, and Westover. The proposed cost of this work is \$250,000, of which 80% will be provided by Federal funds, 10% from State funds, and 5% each from Monongalia County and the City of Morgantown. This project is funded partially in the current fiscal year and it is included in the FY 2021-2022 UPWP.

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff requests the Policy Board to adopt this scope of work. The MPO also requests the Policy Board to authorize the Executive Director and the Policy Board Chairman to sign the contract for this work upon successful completion of the negotiations.

Mr. Austin noted that the scope of work is only for the transportation plan update. The county and municipalities will negotiate with the consulting firm under separate contracts. Mr. Austin noted that Mon County, Westover, and Granville came close to finalizing their contract. Star City currently has concerns about the cost. The City of Morgantown has hired a new planning director. Mr. Austin noted that he will discuss with the director about the project next week.

Councilperson Selin moved to approve the scope of work and the authorization; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

## **8. Performance Measure**

### **a. Pavement Management/Bridge Maintenance**

Mr. Austin noted that the FAST Act requires that the State Departments of Transportation adopt performance measures for a variety of transportation purposes. The MPO recently adopted the state's Highway Safety performance measures. In addition to safety, Congress expressed an interest in ensuring that roadway surfaces and bridges are well maintained. To accomplish this, the states are to set goals for the condition of their pavement and bridges.

### **b. Congestion Management**

Mr. Austin noted that besides the performance measures on maintenance, the State has also developed goals for the measures on congestion management, including travel time reliability and emission reduction. Mr. Austin noted that the table showing the State's goals are included in the agenda package. In the State Transportation Improvement Program, the DOH uses the Performance Measure 1 (PM1) for safety-related measures; the Performance Measure 2 (PM2) for maintenance-related measures, including bridges; and the Performance Measure 3 (PM3) for travel time liability-related measures.

Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the performance measure as presented; seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

## 9. Mountain Line Transit Study

Mr. Austin noted that the Mountain Line Transit Authority has recently completed a short to medium-range transit plan. The Plan reviews Mountain Lines' current operations and makes recommendations for improvements. The executive summary of the study is included in the agenda package. The full plan is available at the MPO's website.

Mr. Bruffy noted the study recommends the expansion of evening service, weekend service and core urban area, and infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Bruffy moved to adopt the Mountain Line Transit Study; seconded by Mr. Councilperson Kawecki. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

Councilperson Selin expressed her appreciation for the study.

## 10. Don Knott's Blvd Crash Report

Mr. Austin noted that the crash report on Don Knotts Blvd is included in the agenda package. He noted that the report identifies several high crash locations particularly at Pleasant Street, Greenbag Road, Smithtown Road (SR 43), and Foundry Street. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO has gotten better access to the DOH's crash database. The Policy Board can request the MPO staff to prepare similar crash reports at other locations of interest.

Councilperson Selin asked about the improvements that could be done to improve the Don Knott's Blvd corridor. Mr. Austin noted that the countermeasures used by traffic engineers include improving signs and pavement markings, improving intersection alignment, reducing speed limit. Mr. Carr noted that enhanced enforcement could improve the traffic safety as well.

Mr. Justice moved to adopt the crash report as presented; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

## 11. Letter Concerning Project Delays

Chairman Bloom noted that the County Commission has concerns about the lack of progress on the construction of the Mileground Project and the improvement of the University Avenue/Collins Ferry Road intersection. WVDOH identified 14 parcels that had been submitted to the judicial system for consideration. The Commission has requested the MPO Executive to prepare a letter calling attention to the court about the cases and requesting that those cases be processed in an expedite way. Commissioner Sikora agreed and noted that it is important for the public to know the status of the project. Commissioner Arnett noted that the Commission only seek an expediated process for court decisions to move the project forward.

Recorder Blinco moved to approve the Letter as presented; seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

## 12. Other Business

Commissioner Bloom noted that the DOH recently did a road widening study on Sunset Beach Rd. Mr. Austin noted that some residents living in the Cheat Lake area raised their concerns about Sunset Beach Rd to the DOH. In response, the DOH prepared a preliminary study on the issue, outlining the estimated cost of requested improvements. Commissioner Bloom noted that the DOH identified two

alternatives to fix the problems with the estimated cost of \$19 million and \$13 million. He hopes that the MPO will be aware of this issue when updating its Metropolitan Transportation Plan this year.

Councilperson Selin asked about how the project of this type could be included in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Mr. Carr noted that the best time to include this type of project is during the transportation plan update. The DOH expect all requested highway projects are in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, regardless of this tiers or priorities. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO only authorize projects that involve federal funds. It has no control over the projects which funded only by state funds.

## **11. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned on 6:54 PM.