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Morgantown Monongalia MPO Bike & Pedestrian Transportation Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #5 | Morgantown Municipal Airport

Thursday, August 15th, 2019 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Meeting Notes

Steering Committee / Attendees:

1. Christiaan Abildso, WVU Health Research Center
2. Bill Austin, Executive Director, Morgantown Monongalia MPO
3. Ella Belling, Mon River Trails Conservancy
4. Heather Britton, Disability Community
5. Brian Carr, WV DOT Division of Highways
6. Damien Davis, Morgantown City Traffic Engineer
7. Andrew Gast-Bray, Dir of Planning, Monongalia County Planning Commission
8. Drew Gatlin, Staff Engineer City of Morgantown
9. Marc Glass, City of Westover
10. Ron Justice, WVU Government Relations, MPO Policy Board Member
11. Emily Muzzarelli, Morgantown Assistant City Manager
12. Jenny Selin, Morgantown City Council and MPO Policy Board
13. Mary Jo Thompson, Project Manager – Strategic Initiatives, WVU
14. Jing Zhang, Morgantown Monongalia MPO
15. Consultant Team: Phil Goff (Alta), Laura Byer (Alta, via Conference Call), and Cory Luzier (Stantec, via Conference Call)

Welcome & Introductions

Welcome by Bill Austin

Approval of Steering Committee Meeting 4 Meeting Notes

Approved by unanimous vote, with Ella Belling included as the one unidentified commenter

Discussion of Draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Recommendations and Top 10 Safety Projects

- Phil Goff (PG): WRA (Baltimore-based consulting firm) is in negotiations with DOH to provide pedestrian improvements on DOH roadways in the Morgantown region. I will reach out to Adam Weiser to make sure these improvements are in-line with the recommendations in this plan.

Regardless of whether WRA is under contract or not, we want to make sure DOH provides comments on the recommended networks.

- Marc G: It's difficult to review the map as is since not all streets are labeled. One suggestion is to number the segments on the map to correspond to the numbers in the table to streamline/help reviewers easily find projects on the map
 - PG: We will consider ways to link the map to the table without cluttering the map. Maybe a grid system (A1, A2, etc.) for easy reference? Either way, we'd likely make two versions of the map – one with numbers and one without, for PDF viewing and for the report, respectively.
- Drew G: I would like to discuss access management - reducing the number of or consolidating driveways, restricting access in some locations, frontage roads, etc. This should be discussed in the plan, especially on 705.
 - Brian C: It is a good idea to implement access management techniques but we can't force property owners to give up their land after the fact. Access management treatments need to be applied during initial development proposal.
 - Andrew G-B: We can try and take advantage of some opportunities where access management may be possible, but move forward since the odds are slim.
 - PG: Access management seems to be an important topic to a number of committee members, so Alta will include a general recommendation in the Implementation section of the report that references the importance of access management and that the City and DOH should make an effort to reach out to commercial and residential property owners on key corridors to discuss opportunities for consolidating curb cuts and other access-management improvements.
- Drew G: I noticed there are no recommendations for the Patteson/Raleigh intersection...this seems like a good spot for a new ped crossing. Also, there are a couple of spots in Suncrest nearby where existing sidewalks are missing in the map.
 - PG: during the Ped Safety Audit conducted in June, the group looked at that intersection and decided there were too many challenges there, and that the University Ave crossing was proximate enough to accommodate ped crossing.
- Brian C: This brings up the issue related to what does the community want the main corridors (Beechurst, Patteson, etc.) to be? Complete streets? Traffic corridors? It is hard to get everything – both multi-modal and fast transportation - so we need to determine what the community wants these corridors to be and how they community wants them to operate.
- Bill A: the scope of this project is to provide safe and accessible bike and pedestrian facilities on existing facilities, not to focus on longer-term transformations of road corridors. Land use revisions or Complete Streets policies are more typically found in implementation strategies within city or county Comp Plans. That is a separate effort from the MPO's Ped/Bike Transportation Plan whose focus is improvements within the current context of local and state roads in the region. (Similar point reiterated by Jenny S)
 - PG: there is probably a place in this plan to have a general discussion about defining the "gateway corridors" that should ultimately become more community-oriented streets, along with access management, to promote bicycling and walking but it isn't in the scope to include in-depth or specific recommendations for these topics.
- Discussion related to the Top 10 Bike Projects for Safety

- Brian C: Mileground Road is soon to be reconstructed to a 5-lane road with a sidewalk on one side, but the current design does not include bike lanes.
- Drew G: Its frustrating that we will have another major DOH project that doesn't include proper bike facilities. How can this plan effect that? (After some back and forth, it was agreed that the plan should continue to show a recommended bike lane on Mileground with the possibility that it could be included ultimately along the corridor.
- Marc G: how does wayfinding play a role in the "signage" part of the SLM and Signage?
 - PG: currently, the map implies only wayfinding signage on the routes designated with the shared lane markings, but realistically, they should be more extensive throughout the network. We will include a general recommendation related to wayfinding and bike route signage throughout the whole network.
- PG: regarding Chestnut Ridge/Van Voorhis construction work, are there any updates regarding the inclusion of bike lanes during the Chestnut Ridge/Van Voorhis re-stripping?
 - Bill A: No update
- Christiaan A: for the recommendation at High/Prairie Street, we likely need to have more than just an RRFB and crosswalk. Including a bike climbing lane on High St and possibly a bump out on the side where parking is allowed should be considered.
- Drew G: for 8th Street, more than sharrows are needed. Since parking has recently been prohibited—except in only 3 places—there is space potentially for a two-bike bike lane/cycle track along one side.
 - PG: for such a steep hill, a two-way bike lane can be a real challenge as bicyclists in one direction will need to ride directly adjacent to cars going in the opposite direction...its likely better to look at a climbing lane for access up to University Ave and sharrows in the downhill direction.
- Christiaan A: on the map, Mon Blvd should not be shown as existing bike lane as DOH did not stripe it that way (climbing lane in places but then no shoulder elsewhere). This should be shown as a future bike lane and perhaps it will be added in the future. We also need to have a climbing lane, at minimum, on Patteson Drive rather than sharrows.
 - PG: yes, we will relook at those and make the changes, as needed
- Drew G: although other parts of Willey Street are more narrow, the segment from High St to Richwood (shown as a bike safety project) has space for a climbing lane
- Ella B: will the plan include some streets with bike lanes that include a buffer or delineator posts?
 - PG: the recommendation will simply be "bike lane" but in future implementation, consideration should be made for a buffer or a separated bike lane, that will be described in the design guidelines of the report

Prioritization Criteria

- Marc G: Will the safety criterion consider all crashes or just bike- and pedestrian-involved crashes?
 - PG: Just bike- and pedestrian-involved crashes
- Brian C: Will the safety criterion consider crash rates (based on traffic volumes) or the gross number of crashes?

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- PG: We will look into the appropriate methodology to consider crashes in the safety criterion and work it into the methodology.
- PG: Regarding weighting of criteria – do committee members think that all criteria should be weighted equally? Or should different weight be applied to the criteria in order of importance?
 - Emily M: to me, safety, connectivity, and feasibility are the most important
 - Marc G: the real goal of this plan is to have connectivity, so I'd weigh that the highest
 - Christiaan A: I encourage connectivity be heavily weighed and would not over-emphasize safety because, as we've discussed, it will be a tough number to generate. Would also like to include Economy as a high-weighted criterion.
 - Bill A: recommends discussing weighting via email to finalize but seems as though connectivity is important to a majority of the group
 - Brian C: available money (feasibility) is always an issue and perhaps should be kept separate as a criterion so as to not "throw off" the scoring of good projects that happen to be expensive. If the number one priority is to be safety or connectivity, that could help funnel additional funds to expensive projects
- Jenny S: For the Economy criterion, how would we score it if there is lots of jobs on one end of the corridor and residence on the other? We should consider both.
- Andrew G-B: we should incorporate both to capture the intensity efficiency of each project
 - PG: all good points...For the "Employment" criterion, we will include both the number of jobs and residents in our calculations. The scores will also be divided by the length of the segment, so that longer segments do not all score the highest.

Discussion of Fall Demonstration /Pilot Project

- Phil described the two options: Option 1, Patteson pilot project - work with DOH to implement temporary safe crossings for 1-3 months at the Laurel Street intersection and Option 2, Spruce Street/Farmers Market demonstration project - temporary protected bike lane and pedestrian crossing improvements for a day, like a Saturday to coordinate with the Farmers Market
- Ron J: thinks we should do the farmers market event as it is more likely something that can get implemented permanently in the future, vs the Patteson Dr option. WVU has tried on many occasions to get improvements for pedestrians, only to be told "no" by DOH's district engineer (other committee members agreed that it would be easier to pull off option 2)
- Jenny S: I propose trying for both of them to increase the likelihood that DOH will give us the OK for one of the options, likely Spruce St. Perhaps we could seek an "event permit", similar to parades which the City frequently receives from DOH on their roads downtown
- Brian C: a lot of traffic control is involved for these options - especially Patteson Dr - and DOH accepts liability if something happens during the demo/pilot project. The City may need to accept liability for this initiative to work on a DOH roadway
- Group agrees to try for both projects with the expectation that DOH is likely to say "no" to Patteson Dr but hope for a "yes" for Spruce St/Farmers Market
- Damien D: I think we should try to have the Spruce St demo project out for a week, so we have some time to evaluate impact of the lane reduction (from 3 to 2) on traffic and safety
- Damien D and Bill A: both agreed to be the liaison to DOH and help to coordinate the permit
- PG: will reach out to committee members to help coordinate the volunteers needed for the demonstration project to be held (pending permitting) in the mid/late October