

October 24, 2011

Cindy L. Cramer, PE
WV DOH Traffic Engineering
Building 5 Room A 550
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Cindy

The Morgantown downtown traffic study currently being conducted by Andrew Nichols of the Rahall Transportation Institute offers a tremendous opportunity for Morgantown. Nearly all comments during Dr. Nichols' presentation on Thursday, October 6, 2011, concerned the flow of pedestrians through downtown Morgantown. As the Main Street movement acknowledges, walkability is critical to the vitality and survival of America's main streets and downtowns. Downtown Morgantown is no exception. It is a center for retail, commercial, business, and residential areas. Many downtown pedestrian malls have been developed over the past half century. According to a 2008 report by the Memphis Center City Commission (http://www.indydt.com/Pedestrian_and_Transit_Malls_Study.pdf), the most successful pedestrian malls occur in areas similar to Downtown Morgantown, including being located in a college town, having mixed active uses, many captive users (residents), adjacent parking, and others (see slide 17). Thriving pedestrian malls exist in Boulder, Burlington, Ithaca, and Charlottesville – all cities similar demographically and culturally to Morgantown.

There exists a great opportunity to further redevelop Downtown Morgantown into a thriving, vibrant hub for culture and commerce for families and students by building a walkable, safe area for residents and workers with pedestrian-friendly connections to nearby single family neighborhoods – as the Downtown Morgantown strategic plan states (<http://www.morgantown.com/downtown-plan.htm>) to “address the vehicular and pedestrian circulation throughout this area in order to ensure that downtown inhabitants and surrounding neighborhoods can all access this area safely and easily.” (page 66)

To this end, the City of Morgantown would like to study the feasibility of creating a downtown pedestrian mall at one of two locations: a) Chestnut Street from Willey Street to Pleasant Street and b) High Street from Willey Street to Pleasant Street. These would still allow for crossing traffic at Walnut and/or Fayette Streets. An immediate concern to implementing such a project for businesses will undoubtedly be the impact on vehicular traffic. Therefore, the City of Morgantown and its partners undersigned ask the West Virginia Department of Transportation and Division of Highways to model the potential impact of two mutually exclusive scenarios on traffic flow and congestion:

- 1) Eliminating vehicular traffic on Chestnut Street from Willey Street to Pleasant Street
- 2) Eliminating vehicular traffic on High Street from Willey Street to Pleasant Street while simultaneously redesigning Spruce Street to allow for two-way traffic and widen sidewalks

Thank you for considering our request,

Terrence Moore
City Manager, City of Morgantown

Jim Manilla
Mayor, City of Morgantown

Christiaan Abildso
Chair, Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Board

Name?
President?, Main Street Morgantown

Bill Kawecki
President, South Park Association of Neighbors

Matthew Held
President, Greenmont Neighborhood Association

Kara Hurst
Morgantown Green Team

Name?
President?, Morgantown Tree Board

cc: Bill Austin, Morgantown Metropolitan Planning Organization
Roy Nutter, Chair, City of Morgantown Traffic Commission