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Subject: WVDOH proposed Two-Way Left Turn Lane (TWLTL) on Mon Blvd.
between Boyers Av. and Patteson Dr.

The Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board is disappointed that the WVDOH apparently did not consider bicyclists in their proposed Mon Blvd. TWLTL and recommends that the MPO encourage the WVDOH to amend their proposal to include (in accordance with the 2009 MUTCD and the 2011 AASHTO Guidelines for the Development of Bicycle Facilities)

- a minimum 8-foot wide bicycle-climbing lane on the uphill side of Mon Blvd. between Boyers Av. and Patteson Dr.;
- R4-11 Bicycles May Use Full Lane signs every 250 feet on the downhill side, and
- an 8-foot wide smooth paved shoulder on the downhill side.

The WVDOH proposed Mon Blvd. TWLTL conflicts with the Greater Morgantown Bicycle Plan that the WVDOH helped to create.

WVDOH proposes to narrow the shoulders to 4-feet. Narrowing the uphill shoulder to 4-feet will preclude making it a bicycle-climbing lane. The Greater Morgantown Bicycle Plan Engineering Action #17 is to install a bicycle-climbing lane on Monongahela Boulevard between Boyers Avenue and Patteson Drive. AASHTO recommends a minimum 5-foot width for bike lanes or wider when the bicycle lane is adjacent to high-speed motor traffic.

The proposed TWLTL will likely increase average motor vehicle speed. Narrowing the shoulders and increasing the speed in the travel lanes will increase risk to bicyclists and pedestrians who still choose to use the shoulders. Many will avoid this route altogether due to safety concerns.

The proposed TWLTL will increase safety for Type Aⁱ cyclists if motor vehicle speed remains the same or decreases. The proposed TWLTL will increase Type A cyclist safety and convenience for the same reasons that the TWLTL would increase safety for motorists.

Unfortunately, most Morgantown area cyclists are Type Bⁱⁱ cyclists that use the shoulders rather than the travel lanes. Narrowing the shoulders on either side of Mon Blvd. can be expected to discourage the few Type B cyclists that use them now.

Knowing that they have the same right to the travel lanes as motorists, Type A cyclists ride in the rightmost travel lane that serves their destination. However, even among Type A cyclists, few will ride the travel lane up the hill on Mon Blvd. because they are scared by motor vehicles passing them closely at high speeds. Even Type A cyclists can be expected to prefer a bicycle-climbing lane on the uphill side of Mon Blvd.

More Type A cyclists and perhaps even some Type B cyclists could be expected to use the downhill travel lanes if R4-11 Bicycles May Use Full Lane signs were erected in the corridor but most Type B cyclists would still prefer a wide smooth paved shoulder despite the increased risks of right hook, left cross and drive out crashes (especially at Chipps Hollow where a cyclist could easily be travelling in excess of 40 mph) at crossings. Therefore, the Bicycle Board recommends that the downhill shoulder of Mon Blvd. be smoothly paved to a width of 8-feet but NOT marked as a bike lane and that R4-11 signs be erected every 250-feet along the downhill side of Mon Blvd.

Last year, the wide uphill shoulder was smoothly paved. All that remains is to stripe it as a bike lane.

A bicycle-climbing lane on the uphill shoulder:

- would provide an attractive bicycle route from Star City to Evansdale, a destination for many Morgantown area students and cyclists;
- would provide an important connection from the Mon River Trail to Evansdale;
- could be part of an important bicycle corridor connecting the 916-bed Domain and the 336-bed University Commons student apartment complexes to Morgantown so some of those 1,200 students could ride their bikes instead of driving their cars;
- would be an essential part of a bicycle corridor from the University Town Centre to Mileground when Bicycle Plan Action Engineering #18 bicycle lane on both sides of WV 705 from Willowdale Road to Mileground Road is completed so some of the tens of thousands of cars that travel that corridor most days could be left at home when their users choose to bike.

Bicycle lanes are appropriate on roadways with speeds in excess of 25 mph and with few driveways and intersections. Bicyclists traveling in the travel lanes are more visible to motorists merging onto the roadway from businesses such as the

Texas Roadhouse and from intersections including Canfield Av. and Saratoga Av. however since Type B and C cyclists will not use the roadway, the bicycle-climbing lane must maximize cyclist's visibility. Current sightlines are excellent however at a minimum, signage should be placed at these crossings to alert merging motorists that they're crossing a bike lane and to watch for bicyclists.

In addition to contradicting the Greater Morgantown Bicycle Plan, the WVDOH proposed Mon Blvd. TWLTL conflicts with the 2040 LRTP that WVDOH also helped to create. Tier 1 project #40 Regional Bikeway Plan Implementation Program includes projects from the Greater Morgantown Bicycle plan.

The WVDOH proposed Mon Blvd. TWLTL violates the Monongalia County and Morgantown Complete Streets Policies. The proposed TWLTL will make Mon Blvd. more dangerous to pedestrians and Type B cyclists.

In summary, Monongalia County and the City of Morgantown are striving to achieve a modern multi-modal transportation system. The proposed TWLTL project fails to consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. The Bicycle Board requests you to encourage the WVDOH to amend their proposal to include (in accordance with the 2009 MUTCD and the 2011 AASHTO Guidelines for the Development of Bicycle Facilities)

- a minimum 8-foot wide bicycle-climbing lane on the uphill side of Mon Blvd. between Boyers Av. and Patteson Dr. and
- R4-11 Bicycles May Use Full Lane signs every 250 feet on the downhill side
- an 8-foot wide smooth paved shoulder on the downhill side.

If the WVDOH will not make these amendments to their proposal, the Bicycle Board requests that the MPO deny the WVDOH proposal to amend the TIP to add the proposed TWLTL project.

As you know, Morgantown achieved Bronze Level recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community last year. The City intends to retain the award and even try for a Silver award in 2015 (see Greater Morgantown Bicycle Plan Encouragement Action #16). The WVDOH TWLTL as proposed is a step backward for a bicycle friendly community.

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Cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as vehicles

ⁱ Type A cyclists, according to AASHTO are “advanced or experienced riders that are generally using their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle. They are riding for convenience and speed and want direct access to destinations with a minimum of detour or delay. They are typically comfortable riding with motor vehicle traffic however, they need sufficient operating space on the traveled way or shoulder to eliminate the need for either themselves or a passing motor vehicle to shift position”.

ⁱⁱ Type B cyclists, according to AASHTO are “basic or less confident adult riders that may also be using their bicycles for transportation purposes, e.g., to get to the store or to visit friends, but prefer to avoid roads with fast and busy motor vehicle traffic unless there is ample roadway width to allow easy overtaking by faster motor vehicles. Thus, basic riders are comfortable riding on neighborhood streets and shared use paths and prefer designated facilities such as bike lanes or wide shoulder lanes on busier streets”.