



Monongalia County Commission and Governor Justice Announce \$54.3m Federal Grant for Regional Improvements at I-79 Exit 155

MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA (December 15): The United States Department of Transportation notified officials today that the Monongalia County Commission will be awarded \$54.3 million in federal grant funding to enhance and expand roadway improvements at I-79 Exit 155 and Chaplin Hill Road.

The "I-79 Chaplin Hill Gateway Project" aims to reduce congestion and improve safety in the area of Exit 155 on I-79 by:

- Reconfiguring the Exit 155 interchange (Chaplin Hill Road at I-79)
- Replacing the aging I-79 bridges over Chaplin Hill Road
- Constructing a two-lane flyover for westbound traffic leaving Morgantown at the intersection of U.S. Route 19 / Monongahela Boulevard / Chaplin Hill Road
- Improving Chaplin Hill Road in the area adjacent to Exit 155 into a multi-lane boulevard style roadway with adjacent dedicated shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Connecting the Mon River Trails network across the Monongahela River to the planned shared use path

Monongalia County Commission President Tom Bloom shared the County Commission's excitement, "We are thrilled to announce the successful award of federal funding for the I-79 Chaplin Hill Gateway Project and the County Commissioners are excited to put these federal funds to use in order to enhance, expand, and expedite the Exit 155 project that we've been working on for the last several years. These funds will allow us to reconstruct Exit 155 and Chaplin Hill Road into the gateway which Monongalia County deserves. We want to thank all of the state and federal officials who supported our application, including Governor Justice, Senator Manchin, and Senator Capito."

Governor Jim Justice joined in the excitement, "Securing this \$54 million grant for the I-79 Chaplin Hill Gateway Project is a big win for Monongalia County and our state as a

whole. My administration proudly partnered with the Monongalia County Commission and WestRidge on this crucial Roads-to-Prosperty project for years, and this federal investment will allow us to supercharge our vision. The expanded scope will not only ease congestion and boost safety at Exit 155 but also create a modern, multi-modal gateway to serve the Morgantown community for generations to come. This is a shining example of what we can achieve when we work together, and I'm excited to break ground on this incredible project soon."

About the Grant Application:

- The grant application was submitted to USDOT's FY23-24 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant program, which included funding under the INFRA, Mega, and Rural programs, each funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- The Monongalia County Commission was the grant applicant, and developed the application in a collaborative effort with local partners West Ridge, Inc., the Mon River Trails Conservancy, and Mylan Park.
- Governor Justice's staff worked with the team who submitted the grant application, including providing the attached letter from Governor Justice to USDOT in support of the County's application to the USDOT.

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Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

August 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

As Governor of West Virginia, I would like to share my Administration's support for the grant application being submitted on behalf of the I-79 Chaplin Hill Gateway Project in Morgantown.

The Interstate 79 Exit 155 Star City/Chaplin Hill Road Interchange Improvement Project is progressing via a collaborative effort among the Monongalia County Commission and West Ridge, Inc. Through this grant opportunity, we aim to enhance and expand the current project, providing regional multimodal connectivity.

The I-79 Chaplin Hill Project serves as the pivotal gateway to the area. To the east, the City of Morgantown is home to West Virginia University, with an average of 57,000 fans attending each home football game. This project includes a flyover to reduce congestion in game day traffic. To the west, the Project opens the portion of Monongalia County that is expected to spur 40% of the region's growth over the next two decades. The western alignment will provide safe access to Mylan Park, the epicenter of regional support services, which includes Operation Welcome Home and its support of veterans; PACE Enterprises, which provides job training to those with disabilities; and the Aquatic Center & Track Complex, a \$48 million fully accessible complex that is attracting national swimming competitions. This project is listed in the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MMMPO) Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as a Tier 1 project for Localized Mobility.

The proceeds of a successful grant award are aimed at enhancing the current project by constructing a new four-lane boulevard style corridor with shared use path. This would create a safer connection to Mylan Park by replacing the existing Chaplin Hill Road from I-79 westward to the Mylan Park area with a new four-lane road. It would also upgrade a 3,600 foot section of the existing Chaplin Hill Road to the Monongalia County Schools Transportation Department.

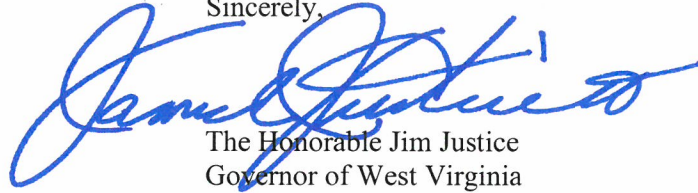
It makes me proud to see public and private entities working together toward safety and economic development solutions. The project will open the western part of the county adjacent to West Virginia University, where 40% of the area's future growth is expected to occur in the next two decades.

Net migration in West Virginia is up for the first time in decades, and we intend to continue building on that growth, but reliable infrastructure is needed to do so. We are developing ready-to-build sites, so we have the groundwork in place to attract businesses and create jobs for our citizens. The western part of Monongalia County is ripe for just this type of growth with major private developments in place and significant future development planned.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

I hope you will join me in supporting the Monongalia County Commission's I-79 Chaplin Hill Gateway MPDG application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Justice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

The Honorable Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia