

I. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COUNTY COMMISSION

West Virginia State Code § 8A-2-11 (9) provides that the Planning Commission has a duty to:

“Make an annual report to the appropriate governing body concerning the operation of the planning commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction;”

The By-Laws of the Monongalia County Planning Commission Article III, Section 6 states:

"The Planning Commission shall make an annual report to the County Commission concerning the operation of the Planning Commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction."

This report is intended to fulfill these statutory obligations.

II. INTRODUCTION

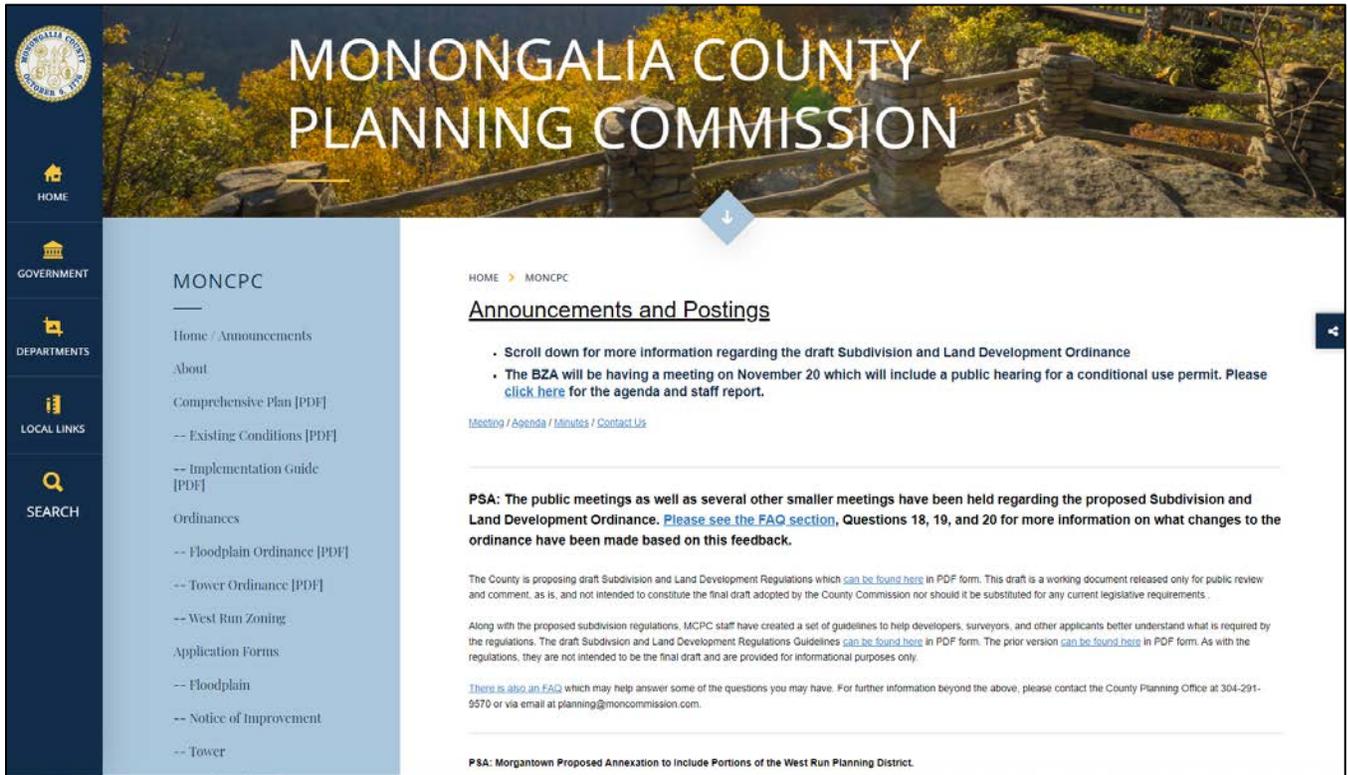
Monongalia County Planning Commission
Monongalia County Courthouse
243 High Street, Room 026
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505
304 291-9570



The County Planning Office is located on the lower level of the Monongalia County Courthouse annex. The office moved there August 18, 2020. The move allowed for staff to reorganize, more room to grow, and a conference room with updated tech for ease of (especially online) presentations. Additionally, the conference room also has a separate entrance which will allow for other offices in the building to utilize it if necessary.

The County Planning Office consists of two divisions, Planning and Floodplain/GIS. The Office is also co-located with the Morgantown / Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization. As the work plans for the two agencies expand with the adoption of additional land use and transportation policies, this location will serve as a one-stop-shop for regional land use planning, transportation planning, and GIS programs and services.

Residents and interested visitors can access a great deal of general county and specific planning-related information at the County Commission's website www.monongaliacounty.gov. Through the internet, citizens can access the Planning Commission's vision and goals, planning related ordinances and application forms; maps; and planning education materials and links. (Note that the website has been updated to improve the user experience).



The **Vision** of the Planning Office is to build a public planning organization that puts customer service first; that is a model for management excellence; and that works, through motivated professionals, toward shaping high quality communities in Monongalia County for residents, business and visitors.

The **Mission** of the Planning Office is to enhance the quality of life and the design of communities, foster innovative planning, and promote sustainable development. This will be accomplished through exercising commitment to public service, fairness, and trust while maintaining respect for individual property rights.

The **Purpose** of the Planning Office is to provide advice and technical expertise to assist Elected Officials, Planning Commissioners, public agencies, and citizens in understanding and dealing with key community issues and priorities and making well-informed and collaborative decisions. The Office continues to focus efforts on a long-term commitment to economic vitality, development design quality, and preservation of natural landscapes. The Office sustains this purpose by pursuing standards of excellence built on partnerships and integrity to achieve more sustainable and diverse communities for today's residents and future generations.

The Planning Office is responsible for:

- **Current Planning** – Administration of land use related ordinances, i.e., floodplain management; wireless communication facilities; and, zoning regulations within the Planning Districts.
- **Community Services** – Providing land use planning advice and technical expertise to residents, community interest groups, public agencies and elected officials who are working to achieve sound land use management and sustainable growth.
- **Future and Advanced Planning** – Conducting comprehensive planning and undertaking special planning projects, i.e., neighborhood plans and redevelopment plans.

III. FY 2020-2021 Progress

COVID-19:

This year has proven extraordinary. A worldwide pandemic, starting in January 2020, changed much in how this office operates.

In mid-March of 2020, the Planning Office utilized work from home for all staff except the Director due to COVID-19. This lasted until mid-May. At that point the offices fully reopened with staff on rotation on opposing days to limit contact between each other. While in office visits by the general public are still allowed, staff has utilized mail-in and email submitted applications where possible. Staff has also looked into the possibility of applications submitted online and/or online payment capabilities.

Planning Commission and BZA meetings continued, going to tele-conference mode. Staff ensured that Surrounding Property Owner Notifications and the website were duly updated to emphasize this change in meeting. While staff has not yet operated a meeting via video-conference, staff has prepared for the possibility.

Staff also was able to utilize extra time to move ahead on several tertiary projects including GIS layer updates, revamping application and online processes, and overhauling of internal file retention requirements.

Strangely, despite Covid and a legal delay, the Planning Office processed more applications than the previous year, which can be attributed to the diligence of support staff in these tough times.

Subdivision Regulations:

The most important undertaking of the Planning Commission for the year was utilizing the downtime due to COVID-19 for a further rework of the draft Subdivision Ordinance and implementation of the Subdivision Ordinance in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. There were two drafts for public review. The March draft had addressed valid complaints from developers about unintentional hurdles in the draft from the preceding year (e.g. 'double dip' bonding requirements). Covid delayed the public roll out of the March draft. While delayed, staff revisited the March draft. The March draft had received complaints about the organization and clarity of the document (a lot of cross-referencing throughout the document made it difficult to use and understand). Whereas none of what the March draft intended to do has changed, the corrected draft is currently under review and is clearer and shorter. If the County Commission determines to move forward with adoption and finalizing the revised ordinance, that is likely to occur in 2021.

Furthermore, the Planning Office has added a 200+ page guideline/toolkit to accompany the regulations, replete with examples, example scenarios, starter application templates and template designs that meet or exceed the ordinance requirements. Staff also added how-to/explanatory videos online to help understand the ordinance and how to use/meet the ordinance requirements.

During the course of the drafting, Staff and the consultants discovered vagueness or lack of clarity in the State enabling legislation (**WV 8A**, specifically as it applies to more urban areas), that guides the development of such ordinances. Staff worked with State legislators to draft proposed fixes to these clarity issues.

If the Subdivision Ordinance is adopted, the Planning Commission will need to engage both County Engineering services as well as set up a Subdivision Appeals Board.

Comprehensive Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan for the Four Planning Districts in Monongalia County was formally adopted by the Monongalia County Commission on February 6, 2013. At the end of 2019, staff began the process to update the Comprehensive, which is required every ten years.

The initial process for the next Comprehensive Plan begins in this fiscal year but was waylaid slightly by the onset of COVID-19. Toward the end of 2020 the process was restarted with Bill Austin, MPO Director, at the helm.

The next comprehensive plan will help guide future development not only in the existing Planning Districts but the county as a whole. Additional planning tools

should also be implemented throughout the county. The Planning Commission continues to rely on the Comprehensive Plan in the implementation of its existing land use regulations and the development of future land use regulations. (A copy of the current-2013 Comprehensive Plan may be found on the county website.)

West Run Zoning Ordinance:

The average number of applications over the past five years (not including violations) has been 29.2, which means that 2020 has been higher than in recent years. Staff presumes part of this is due to COVID-19 and extra home projects being done. Below is the number count for the 2020 calendar year compared to the past five years.

Permit	Number Approve/Issued in 2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Land Use	13 ^A	16	9	10	12	17
Variance	6 ^B	4	3	2	8	4
(Major) Development of Significant Impact	4 (all were DSI) ^C	2	0	0	1	0
Conditional Use	4 ^D	1	2	1	0	1
Map Amendment	1	1	1	2	0	4
Text Amendment	1	1	0	0	1	0
Admin Deviation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admin Interpretation	4 ^E	2	0	1	1	0
Grubbing/Grading	0	1	0	0	0	0
Home Occupation	2	0	0	0	1	0
Zoning Plat	0	0	1	0	0	1
Violations	7 ^F	4	1	2	6	2
TOTAL	35	28	16	16	24	27

A. One was submitted end of year, and issued in Jan 2021

B. Two have not been heard yet due to issues outside their purview, they are slated to be heard in January 2021

C. One hasn't been heard yet due to issues outside its purview, one was heard at the December meeting and tabled to the January 2021 meeting, one was approved, and one was submitted end of year, and will be heard in January 2021

D. Two have not been heard yet due to issues outside their purview, they are slated to be heard in January 2021

E. One went before the BZA

F. Two were not violations, one has been corrected, two are under review, and two are still under violation

Floodplain and GIS:

Michael Paugh, County Floodplain Administrator/GIS Analyst, was folded over into the Planning Office in January of 2020. The floodplain division handles the county's 2019 updated Floodplain Ordinance as well as GIS coordination and helping the Monongalia County Geospatial Committee. Through the MCGC, additional uses and benefits of the County's GIS system are being developed.

Floodplain staff also issued permits within the county area for various activities held within the floodplain. Below is the number count for the 2020 calendar year.

Flood Plain Permits	Number Approve/Issued in 2020
Permits	12
Violations	6
Determinations	22

In regards to floodplain development and permitting it seemed that floodplain permit application submittal was a bit slower in 2020 than years past, but of course that explanation seemed to be rather clear, COVID-19. Mr. Paugh was able to review and approve 12 permit applications, as well as conduct site visits and meet with the applicants as the situation allowed due to the pandemic to solidify proper approval.

The office of floodplain permitting was either notified by public or discovered illegal development regarding 6 violation sites from weekly field inspections in the FEMA designated 100- year floodplain for Monongalia County during 2020. All 6 violations have been brought into conformance through the permitting process or simple fixes.

The office of GIS Coordination did not slow down in the least bit during 2020. Once the pandemic hit West Virginia and the lockdown/ work from home order was given by the Governor there was a great movement to track Coronavirus testing and improve its accuracy here in Monongalia County. That ability was achieved by Mr. Paugh working with MECCA 911, Atlas Geographic and the Mon. County Health Dept. developing a COVID-19 tracking dashboard for tests given utilizing our GIS licensing applications and software.

Multiple GIS mapping and collaboration projects were conducted throughout 2020, please see the list below:

- Chestnut Ridge Park Sled Hill Slope Map
- FAA Antenna Buffer/Airport Map
- Preferred Site Development/ Mon. Co. Subdivision Regulations MCPC
- Monongalia County Develop. Authority Properties Map
- Mon. County/Health Department Cannabis Permitting Map
- Mon. County Broadband Initiative Mapping 2020/2021

The office of GIS Coordination has solidified GIS relationships with new employees at the City of Morgantown and the Morgantown Utility Board to work on cost sharing and data agreements for future projects that will serve all of our county

departments and citizens to make mapping a vital tool for more accurate information.

Mr. Paugh continues to strive to bring Monongalia County to the forefront of Geographic Information Systems technology in the State of West Virginia heading into 2021.

Tower Ordinance:

The Planning Office continues to implement provisions of the Monongalia County Tower Ordinance. It should be noted that the ordinance appears to be working in promoting co-locations over new tower construction, over the past year. Additionally, the number of new colocations has a dropped as most requests this year were actually for in-kind replacement of existing equipment. We added a category, as they consume a bit of time – clearances for work on towers that do not ADD capacity (i.e. colocation) or increase 3D footprint. Carriers are modifying existing equipment to handle 5G.

Tower Permits	Number Approve/Issued in 2020
New Towers	0
Colocations	6
Clearance Requests	22

Other:

The County Commission approved a shared split-position with the MPO to handle some of the more secretarial and web related items on each entities' docket. Jessica Shuey was hired for this new position in March of 2020.

The Planning Office has also continued to coordinate activities with the Morgantown / Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization; and respond to inquiries and information requests by developers and the citizenry. Planning and Floodplain staff is an active partner with the MPO in its effort to improve transportation in the county.

IV. MCPC Staff and Commission/Board Members

MONONGALIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Director of Planning: Andrew Gast-Bray, Ph.D., AICP, CNU-A

County Planner: Patricia Booth, AICP

Planning Tech: Jessica Shuey (half-time, shared with the MPO)

Flood Plain Administrator/GIS Coordinator: Michael Paugh, CFM, GISP

MONONGALIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

President: Matthew Ridgway

Vice President: Vince Putkowski

County Commissioner: Ed Hawkins (will be replaced in 2021)

Other Members:

Frank Devono

Barton Loar

Rick Colebank

Joe Panico

Michael Mills

Bader Giggenbach

Ex-officio: Robert Andriotto, County Surveyor

In 2020 the MCPC lost one member, Erica Bowe, but also gained a member, Frank Devono.

WEST RUN PLANNING DISTRICT BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Chair: Eric Powell

Vice Chair: Kent Pauley

Other Members:

Billy Smerka

Frank Oliverio

James Barnes

In 2020 the BZA lost two members, Steve Morris and Bill Rice. Both had been members since the inception. The BZA also gained three new members, Billy Smerka, Frank Oliverio, and James Barnes.

V. MCPC Budget and Expenditures

Pertinent Planning Commission (Acct.#439) Expenditures and Budgets

DESCRIPTION	Expenditures 2019-2020	Budget 2019- 2020	Budget 2020- 2021*	Budget 2021- 2022**
PERSONNEL SERVICES				
103 Salaries-All Emps.	\$144,500.16	\$212,348.00	\$ 144,500.00	\$ 150,000.00
104 FICA	\$8,683.20	\$8,075.00	\$ 8,960.00	\$ 9,000.00
104-1 MEDICARE	\$2,030.67	\$1,889.00	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 2,100.00
105 Group Insurance	\$16,237.46	\$21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
106 Retirement	\$14,449.91	\$13,025.00	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 15,000.00
108 Overtime/Extra Help	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$185,901.40	\$256,337.00	\$ 191,060.00	\$ 197,100.00
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES				
211 Telephone	-\$9.37	\$500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
212 Printing	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
214 Travel	\$2,293.45	\$3,500.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
216 Maintenance - Equipmt	\$0.00	\$800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00
218 Postage	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
219 Building/Equipmt Rent	\$3,894.01	\$4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
220 Legal Publications	\$551.85	\$2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
221 Training/Education	\$705.00	\$4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
222 Dues/Subscriptions	\$889.00	\$2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
223 Professional Services	\$174.95	\$3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
230 Contracted Services	\$7,039.03	\$49,500.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
TOT CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$15,537.92	\$71,300.00	\$ 116,300.00	\$ 116,300.00
COMMODITIES				
341 Supplies and Materials	\$1781.09	\$3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
459 Equipment	\$2,784.70	\$3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL COMMODITIES	\$4,565.79	\$6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
TOTAL - ALL LINE ITEMS	\$206,005.11	\$333,637.00	\$ 313,360.00	\$ 319,400.00
Other: Comp. Plan***				\$ 100,000.00

***Note:** Both Salary and Contracted Services were originally slated to cover half a planner and County Engineering services options, tentatively, until County Commission decided which way they wanted to fund half a planner. Budget reflects the final decision though last year's annual report did not. Now, both the half planner and County Engineering services are under Contracted Services ONLY.

** Reflects cost of living adjustment

***May not be a part of the MCPC budget

VI. Final Remarks

Throughout the 2020 calendar year, the MCPC has been involved in multiple projects, including working on the subdivision regulations and updating the technical side of how the office operates. Below are the MCPC's future goals to carry this momentum forward into 2021 and a few pictures from projects permitted in 2020.

Future Goals:

- Updating the Comprehensive Plan (including financing and partnering with regional governments - underway)
- Updating and Revising the Zoning Ordinance (underway)
- Creation of Additional Planning Districts
- Implementation of the Subdivision Ordinance (if adopted)
- Other critical planning elements including (mixed middle and affordable) housing, transportation planning and economic development support

	Current	Short-term (6-12 mos)	Long-term (1-3 yrs)
Plans & Regs	Finish Subdivision Ordinance	WV 8A Improvements, Begin Comp Plan/MTP	Improve/Review Sub. Ordinance, Complete Comp Plan/MTP, Revamp WRZO
Board Ops	Membership	MCPC enhanced functions (Committee assignments)	MCPC enhanced operations (Streamline boards to make participation easier for board members)
Admin	Quotidian tasks (applications, website)	Meet administrative Requirements, Revamp Applications	Realtime Online Reporting, Finish GIS files