

The Cities of Ranson and Charles Town

Transportation Development Fee Study



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6/10/2011



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the technical methodologies and assumptions used to estimate a transportation development fee for Ranson and Charles Town, West Virginia. The region has experienced development pressures in recent years and significant growth is expected over the next 20 years according to *Direction 2035*, the current Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). With limited state funding available for local transportation improvements, a transportation-specific development fee has been identified as one possible method to assist in funding key transportation infrastructure improvements that would support regional access and reduce congestion. The transportation development fees would be implemented as municipal fees as enabled by West Virginia Code §8-13-13, which provides that every municipality has the plenary power and authority to impose an ordinance fee to support municipal services including the maintenance and improvement of streets within its jurisdiction.

The fee structure was developed through a cooperative effort involving the West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOT), HEPMPPO, county and city staff with the assistance of a consultant. The following key principles were used to guide the development of the fee structure:

- Legally and technically defensible
- Financially constrained
- Related to “real” project needs
- Fair and consistent
- Simple to administer

The primary steps to estimate the transportation development fee structure included estimating a “build-out” growth scenario, analyzing roadway congestion needs, identifying potential transportation projects to address those needs, allocating project costs to new development, and estimating the fee structure for different land use types. Each of these steps and the resulting fee structure is described within this technical report. Appendices have been included providing additional information and technical details for reference. Appendix D provides a two page overview of the fee structure that can serve as a primary distribution resource.

To ensure the analysis was reasonable and defensible, this study included data collection efforts to obtain traffic counts, interactions with city staff to identify developments that have been previously proposed or discussed, use of the regional travel demand model to estimate traffic congestion, and use of national trip generation references to assist in the development of the fee structure. The project identification process was based on a thorough review of congestion, mobility and safety needs within the urban growth area. The fee structure has included adjustments to ensure that new development is fairly assessed their portion of project costs. The analyses have included methodologies to account for existing congestion levels and the current and future congestion burden due to regional through travel.

Future updates to this report may be warranted as updated projects lists, costs and development growth become available. It is the hope of both cities that this report and the projects included are not only used for fee development but also used as a long term plan for identifying key needs and evaluating alternative options to improve the transportation infrastructure in the region.