The City of Morgantown

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Safe Street and Safe Community Service Fee Plan

This plan is in accordance with the Morgantown City Council's direction to discuss and review a plan of action for the implementation of a user fee. The goal of the Service Fee is to improve the safety of the City by the maintenance level of City streets and improve the level of police protection in residential areas, business districts, and throughout the City.

Background

W.V. Code 8-13-13 provides that every municipality has the plenary power and authority to provide by ordinance for the installation, continuance, maintenance or improvement of services, to make reasonable regulations with respect thereto, and to impose by ordinance upon the users of such services reasonable rates, fees, and charges to be collected in the manner prescribed in the ordinance.

Based on recent census information (2010) regarding the commuting population, Morgantown's estimated population is 29,076. Of that population, Census figures suggest that 12,160 also work in the City. In addition, it was estimated that another 20,487 people work in the City that do not live in the City. Based on those numbers, the Census Bureau estimates the daytime population to be 49,563 in the City of Morgantown. Their numbers do not include students, visitors, or tourists. It is estimated that the daytime population increases by approximately 70% just due to commuters from outside the city. All residents, workers employed, and visitors within the City of Morgantown expect to be provided city services for well-maintained streets and adequate necessary police protection.

Street Maintenance

The City has nearly 100 miles of streets that it maintains which has an estimated resurfacing value of 33 million dollar (asphalt and concrete). In order to get the resurfacing cycle back to 10-15 years for each street to be resurfaced, we would need to set aside nearly 2 million dollars each year. A portion of this amount could also be used for improving streets and right-of-ways (for instance, widening streets, improving street function, right-of-ways, and improving public alleys).

Maintenance of streets also includes cleaning and winter treatment. Employees and residents rely on getting to places of employment during any weather situation. Improvement of winter treatment of City streets will include purchasing new equipment to the fleet and replacing aged fleet. In addition, an increase in personnel will improve the number of treatment vehicles on the street after a winter event. Additional personnel will also help improve other public works activities outside of winter months, such as maintenance and cleaning of streets and right-of-ways. Equipment needed to improve maintenance of City streets includes trucks, plows, sweepers, vacuum trucks, and other vehicles to support street maintenance.

Police Protection

The Police Department is currently responding to 49,470 calls for service (2014) with 65 officers, more calls than all other police agencies in the County added together. As calls for service increase without the number of officers increasing, the less preventative services, traffic enforcement, or community policing can occur (whether it is in the Downtown or neighborhoods). Based on the current staffing levels and calls for service, the Police Department's primary focus is the response to calls for service with very little opportunity for proactive, preventative and community policing activities.

We enjoy the City of Morgantown to be the place for different events and activities as a quality of life indicator. The City is expected to cover and provide traffic control for special events such as parades, runs, walks, festivals, university activities, holiday events like 4th of July, and some major events like the Morgantown Marathon. Current staffing levels necessitate the use of overtime in order to meet the regular demands of the department such as WVU Sporting events, Downtown Nightlife as well as the majority of special events hosted within the City.

We have seen from the Downtown Retail study that even the perception of crime or lack of police protection in a business district can cause people to stay away from the downtown or other business districts.

Additional officers would allow an increase from 3 patrol areas per shift to 5 patrol areas. This will allow individual officers to respond to smaller patrol areas, improving service and effectiveness, with the Downtown getting better coverage 24/7. This improvement would provide an opportunity for better community policing and enforcement strategy.

Estimated Revenue from Service Fee

- Service fee based on employment in the City of Morgantown. A conservative number of workers, based on the census information, is 30,000.
- A fee of $3/week or $156 annually, would equal an estimated $4,680,000.00

Estimated Expenditure of Service Fees

Funded Activity	Percentage	(Estimated amount on $4,680,000)
• Street Resurfacing and Improvement	35-45%	$1,638,000 - $2,106,000
• Public Works Personnel	07-10%	$ 327,600 - $ 468,000
• Street Maintenance Equipment	07-10%	$ 327,600 - $ 468,000
• Police Protection Personnel / Retention	25-30%	$1,170,000 - $1,404,000
• Police Equipment	06-10%	$ 280,800 - $ 468,000