

# Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance Metropolitan Planning Organization

*Transportation Programming for the Counties of: Carbon ✧ Monroe ✧ Pike ✧ Schuylkill*

## **December 20, 2016 Technical Planning Committee Meeting Summary and Minutes** **9:30 a.m.**

### **Meeting Location:**

**NEPA Alliance  
1151 Oak Street  
Pittston, PA 18640**

### **Technical Planning Committee**

#### **Attendees:**

David Bodnar\*  
Matt Boyer  
Daniel Butch  
Steve Fisher\*  
Ray Green\*  
Micah Gursky\*  
Peggy Howarth\*  
Vanessa Koenigkramer  
Chris Kufro\*  
Amanda Leindecker  
Christine Meinhart-Fritz\*  
Michael Mrozinski\*

#### **Organization:**

Carbon Co. Planning  
Commuter Services  
Luzerne Co. Planning  
PennDOT District 4-0  
PennDOT Central  
St. Luke's Hospital  
MCTA  
PennDOT District 5-0  
PennDOT District 5-0  
PennDOT District 5-0  
Monroe Co. Planning  
Pike Co. Planning

#### **Attendees:**

Matt Pettinato  
Tony Prudenti\*  
Ryan Richards\*  
Susan Smith\*  
Matt Smoker  
  
Alan Baranski  
Nettie Ginocchetti  
Kate McMahan  
Daniel Yelito

#### **Organization:**

PennDOT District 4-0  
West Penn Twp.  
Carbon Co. Planning  
Schuylkill Co. Planning  
FHWA  
  
NEPA Alliance  
NEPA Alliance  
NEPA Alliance  
NEPA Alliance

\*Committee members who voted at this meeting.

### **Summary of Actions Taken by the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee:**

During the course of this meeting the MPO Committee voted on the following actions:

Action 1: Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Committee to approve the minutes from the October 25, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Green to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Kufro. The motion passed.

**Mr. Mrozinski called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **1) Business Items**

##### Approval of minutes from the October 25, 2016 Business Meeting

Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Committee to approve the minutes from the October 25, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Green to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Kufro. The motion passed.

## 2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

### a) District 4-0 2017-2020 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Mr. Fisher noted that in the packet provided by District 5-0, there is one action that affects a project in District 4-0. It is Administrative Action #9. The purpose is for SR 1003 over Lackawaxen River. It was funded at 100% state funds. It was set up as federal funding but it was encumbered right at the start of the fiscal year as state funding. It is just an adjustment through District 5-0.

### b) District 5-0 2017-2020 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Mr. Kufro requested that this item be postponed until other staff from District 5-0 arrives.

### c) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None.

## 3) Transportation Planning & Programs

### a) US DOT Proposed Rulemaking on MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform

Mr. Baranski stated that the final rule was issued on December 15th. We will make it available to the committee. We are still reviewing the final rule but it appears to be largely the same as the proposed rule. The effective date has been pushed to 2022. It will take into consideration the 2020 Census and the definition of UZAs following the Census update. MPOs will have to project out their urbanized areas for the next 20 years. States will be able to identify exceptions to the rule but justification for the exemption must be submitted to US DOT. Mr. Smoker added that the final rule came out on the US DOT website but hasn't been posted in the Federal Register. Mr. Smoker agreed that it is pretty similar to the proposed rule. Additional guidance should be forthcoming. Mr. Baranski noted that with the new administration starting in January, there could be actions to stop the implementation of the final rule. Mr. Smoker noted that there was not Congressional support for the rule so action may be taken on that level. Mr. Baranski noted that we have been in touch with our Congressional delegation regarding this matter.

### b) PennDOT Connects Initiative

Mr. Baranski stated that PennDOT is continuing to develop this initiative. We are anticipating that there will be training for municipalities. A consultant will be used to conduct these training sessions to engage local officials in this effort. The training will outline roles and responsibilities and what the limits of the program are. We expect it to kick off in the spring time when the weather improves. Mr. Mrozinski asked if the policy has been finalized? Mr. Green responded that the policy should be completed in the next week. Mr. Kufro noted that it will apply to projects on the 2017 TIP that have not started PE. District 5-0 does a good job on engaging the locals in the bigger projects but they will start engaging locals on the smaller projects as well. There will be efforts to align projects with the local long range plans. Mr. Baranski noted that documentation is key to the success of the program.

### c) Functional Classification Review

Mr. Baranski stated that we had a meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup> with PennDOT Central Office staff and our neighboring MPOs in District 4-0 including Lackawanna-Luzerne, Northern Tier and Wayne County. We also had staff from District 4-0 and FHWA. The meeting went over the technical steps to undertake the review of functional classification. Mr. Baranski noted that some other Planning Partners across the state are undertaking this process as well. Mr. Baranski noted that any changes need to be supported by data. Mr. Baranski stated that we will begin with Pike County and then move to the counties in District 5-0. Mr. Baranski stated that Mr. Smoker will provide a presentation to the committee at the January meeting. Mr. Gursky requested some background information on functional classification. Mr. Baranski stated that the highway network is classified by tiers based on the amount and type of traffic that they serve and how they function. Mr. Smoker stated that the highway network balances access and mobility. Federal funding can be determined by functional classification. It can also affect the design

standards for the roadway. Mr. Gursky asked what the timeline or completing the project is? Mr. Baranski stated that it will take a year or two to complete. Mr. Gursky asked if there is a deadline? Mr. Baranski stated that there is no deadline but the sooner the better since it affects the availability of federal funds. Mr. Gursky asked if the reclassification can be up or down? Mr. Baranski replied that yes, the classification of the roadway could be down. Mr. Gursky asked when the last review occurred? Mr. Baranski stated that it was in the late 1990s. Mr. Baranski stated that we will be doing the review more often going forward. Mr. Gursky asked if there is a requirement for how often the review must occur? Mr. Smoker stated that it is recommended for every 10 years. There used to be a cap on the amount of miles that could be on the National Highway System but that cap has been lifted. So, there has been an effort to encourage MPOs to conduct the functional classification review. Mr. Smoker noted that along with higher design standards with the National Highway System, there are also performance measures that have to be considered. Ms. Meinhart asked if there is a timeline for the counties in District 5? Mr. Baranski stated that we will get started with Pike County first and then move to the other counties, hopefully by mid-year. Ms. Meinhart stated that the county does traffic counts. Mr. Kufro stated that they can use the counts and match them up with what they have when the time comes.

d) Commuter Services Update

Mr. Boyer provided an update on Commuter Services. He wanted to give everyone an update on where we are currently. It has been 18 months since the program was implemented in this area. A lot of the contacts have been based on the recommendations made by the committee members. The rideshare applications are over 900 and hopefully when people are looking for a rideshare connection, they are having some success. Commuter Services uses a third party for performance reviews. Over a million miles have been removed from the road by this service. Those miles are then translated into emissions reductions which is important since the program is paid through CMAQ funds.

e) Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Mr. Baranski stated that the NEPA MPO Policy Board approved the Coordinated Transit Plan on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The final plan is posted on our website. Mr. Baranski stated that we hope to follow up on the actions recommended in the plan. Ms. Smith asked about when the kickoff meetings recommended by the plan would take place? Mr. Baranski stated that we still need a fill a position on a transportation staff. Once we have another person on board, we'll be able to undertake some of the actions recommended by the plan. Ms. Smith stated that she would like to keep up the momentum generated by the plan. Mr. Baranski agreed.

2b) District 5-0 2017-2020 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Information was included in the meeting packet which highlighted 5 administrative actions as presented by Ms. Koenigkramer on behalf of PennDOT District 5-0.

Administrative Actions: 1) D&L Trail Pedestrian Bridge- reprogrammed approved amounts for advance construct authority conversion. The estimated let date is November 3, 2016. Statewide TAP Reserve Line Item is source. 2) 1007 Trib Marshalls Ck-1 1007-03B and 1007-01B do not qualify for federal funding and needed state funding instead. NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item is the source. Ms. Meinhart asked why do they not qualify? The length of the bridge must be over 20 feet and they do not meet that and the functional classification did not qualify for federal funds. 3) I-81 Merge Lanes- adding repurposed earmarks, freeing up funds that will be returned to the region. The Highway-Bridge Line Item is the source. 4) SR 434 Slide – increase to cover a low bid increase. Pine Creek Bridge- increase for additional final design work. The sources are the Scotrun-Swiftwater which was reduced to actual need, Columbia Street Arch Bridge which was federalized to release state highway funds and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Mr. Gursky asked what a slide is? Mr. Kufro stated it is a rock slide project where rock slid onto the road. 5) I-81 Frackville-Mahanoy City- I-81 Bridge Preservation-

adding approved 2017 Interstate Preservation Projects to the IM TIP. The Interstate Preservation Line Item is the source. 6) HSIP Set Aside Reserve- returning funds to the statewide reserve. The sources are the I-80 Median Barrier and I-380 Median Barrier as the funds were obligated on the previous TIP. Schafer School House Road was reduced to the AC amount. Mr. Kufro stated that the project did not happen and it will be redesigned. 7) Fritz Valley Road Normal Creek, SR 191 over Cherry Creek, PA 309 over Leavitts Branch, SR 940 over Wagners Run, 2011 over Big Meadow, SR 2022 over Brodhead Creek, SR3003 over Chapple Creek, PA 901 over Schuylkill River, 901 over I-81 Beam Repl,- Increase to cover personnel expenditures. Composite Adjacent Box Beam and Stites Tunnel Bridge- Updated estimate which was not known during TIP development due to changes in scope. 715 over McMichaels Creek II- add UTL and ROW phases. Mady's Bridges- increase to convert Advance Construct amount. Mahantango Creek Trib- add ROW and UTL- for estimated need. The sources are 1007 Trb Marshall's Ck-1, SR1007 over Marshalls Creek 1007- 01B, 1007- 02B, 1007- 03B and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item are the source. 8) Halliet Road over Brodhead Creek- Add for estimated need. NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item is the source. 9) SR 447 over Brodhead Creek- increase to cover new construction estimate. Cherry Creek Bridge- increase to refined design construction estimate. SR3010 over Pohopoco Creek- AC and advance. The sources are Billing Creek Bridge, Stites Tunnel Bridge, SR 715 over Pocono Creek, SR 2010 over McMichaels Creek, SR 209 Frable to Lesh Rd and NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. 10) D&L Trail Pedestrian Bridge- increase funding to cover bid overage. The statewide TAP Line Item is the source. 11) Interchange Road Resurface- PA 115- Widening, SR 209 over Reading N RR, Deferred ADA Ramps, Cressona Wall Repair on SR 3004, Gold Star Highway Resurface, PA 309- Rush-Kline Twp- increase to cover expenditures to date on current TIP. 209/115 Intersection Improvements- necessary to convert Advance Construct amount. The sources are 61 Safety Imp- Sch. Haven, SR 534 over Swamp Run and the NEPA Highway & Bridge Line Item. 12) Jim Thorpe Bridge- program to convert remaining advance construct amount. SR 2024 Bridge Street, Columbia Street Arch Bridge, SR 447 over Goose Pond Run- Increase to cover updated phase estimate. SR 1014 over Wallenpaupack Creek and SR 2006 over Caldena Creek- add to allow box culverts to be purchased for installation by department forces. The NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item is the source. 13) 309 Pavement Preservation- repurposing of earmark funds. NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item is the source. 14) I-80 Resurface, Exits- 284-293- adding approved project to the 2017 TIP. The Interstate Preservation Line Item is the source.

Ms. Howarth asked about the Bridge Street project in Administrative Action #12. Mr. Kufro stated that it is a different Bridge Street; there is one currently under construction as a P3 bridge.

Ms. Smith asked what the limits of the Rt.309 project are? Mr. Kufro stated that originally it was going to be on the McAdoo portion but they couldn't put it there so they are doing it from Tamaqua to Hometown and then take it from there. There will still be a gap that needs to be addressed. Ms. Smith also asked about the Interstate projects in Schuylkill County. Mr. Kufro stated that there are two projects. One is pavement preservation and the other is bridges. Ms. Smith also inquired about the Cressona wall project and stated that there are concerns about the time length of the detour. The Schuylkill Chamber asked about moving the project to the spring so it might take less time. Mr. Kufro stated that the goal is to get the project moving as quickly as possible. The contract states that it must be done by May 1. Ms. Smith noted that there are issues with the traffic signal and travelers sitting through several cycles. Mr. Kufro stated that he will check into it. Mr. Prudenti asked about the SR191 Brodhead Creek Bridge project increase. There is an additional \$400,000 required for it. What will it be used for? Mr. Kufro stated that he isn't aware of the details.

Mr. Baranski asked about the Schafer School House Road. What is the current status? Mr. Kufro stated that it is being redesigned but it will be a right-in, right-out project. Additional right-of-way will need to be purchased to created dedicated acceleration and deceleration lanes. There will still be no left turns. The state has committed additional funds for the project.

#### 4) Other Business

Jim Thorpe Parking Study- Mr. Baranski stated that we are applying for state planning funds for a study of parking issues in downtown Jim Thorpe. Mr. Baranski stated that the issues came up during the Long Range Transportation Plan development. The planning funds require an 80/20 match- 80% state and 20% local funding. Mr. Baranski spoke with Commissioner Nothstein regarding the project and he expressed support for it. The application will go into PennDOT Central Office before the end of the year.

Mr. Baranski suggested that the committee take a 10 minute break before discussing the Critical Urban Freight Corridors and Critical Rural Freight Corridors.

##### 3 f.) Critical Urban Freight Corridor and Critical Rural Freight Corridor Designations

Mr. Baranski stated that we have provided the committee with information over the past several meetings about designating the Critical Urban Freight Corridors and Critical Rural Freight Corridors. We had some issues getting the freight data into a format that could be shared with the committee since the state's Freight Analysis Tool was password protected. The website NEPA created includes the data that the state has for the freight generators. There is funding available for these freight corridors. There are limits to the amount of total mileage that can be added as freight corridors across the state. We are asked to prioritize their recommendations. It is unclear whether they have to be numerically ordered or can be designated as low-medium-high. Ms. McMahon stated there is a spreadsheet that we have to submit with the mileage and the justification for the designation. Mr. Mrozinski asked if the focus is on the road network, not the generators? Ms. McMahon stated that the freight data points are to be used to assist in identifying where freight may be coming from and whether it is a roadway that should be considered for designation but we still have to look at the roadways they connect to and how they connect to the interstates or other roads already on the Primary Freight Network. Ms. Meinhart asked where the freight data came from? Ms. McMahon stated that the Freight Finder data was provided by PennDOT. Ms. Smith stated that all of the High Ridge Industrial Park was missing. Ms. McMahon stated there were two sets of freight data. One is top freight generators and the other is the Freight Finder data. The reason that PennDOT has asked for input from the Planning Partners is that the freight data may be incomplete. Mr. Mrozinski asked if there is an amount of freight generated for the designation? Ms. Smith stated that it is 500,000 tons per year. She reached out to SEDCO regarding their industrial parks. Several of the businesses are over the 500,000 threshold. Ms. Smith also noted there is a criteria for energy production. There are several energy generators in Schuylkill County.

Mr. Gursky asked what the black points are? Ms. McMahon stated those are the Freight Finder data points. They provide information about the company, the owner, the tonnage in and out of the facility. Ms. Meinhart asked how PennDOT got the data? Ms. McMahon stated that the data was purchased for the development of the Statewide Freight Plan. Ms. Meinhart stated that all of the data points that she checked were not located where they are supposed to be. One of the locations was the owner's home address but is located in Bangor. Ms. Meinhart stated that the data should have been checked before it was sent out. Mr. Mrozinski asked if it falls to the NEPA staff to clean up the data? Mr. Green stated that it should fall to PennDOT to check the data. Ms. Smith stated that she has had issues with other state data. It depends what information was provided. Sometimes home addresses are provided. Sometimes the latitude and longitude is entered incorrectly. Ms. Smith stated that she frequently has to clean up the data.

Mr. Gursky asked about the other data on map? Ms. McMahon pointed out the two roadways that have more than 25% truck traffic. Ms. Smith stated that SR 0025 is located near a landfill so most of the traffic on that road is trucks. Mr. Gursky asked if we have any layers for the agricultural facilities or

mining facilities. Ms. Smith stated that PASDA has a mining production layer that she can share with NEPA. Mr. Gursky also asked about freight generators that fall just outside of our region? Mr. Baranski stated that the Lackawanna-Luzerne MPO will meet in early January to review the freight corridors. Mr. Baranski stated that he will be at that meeting. Mr. Butch stated that at Luzerne County they have been in touch with SEDA COG about Rt. 11.

Mr. Baranski asked everyone to review the freight generators they are aware of and the roadways they are served by. Ms. McMahon stated that NEPA will contact PennDOT regarding the data and see if other areas are having similar issues and if we can do anything to clean up the data. Mr. Baranski asked everyone to send recommendations to NEPA by January 10<sup>th</sup> and we will review them at the meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

**5) Adjournment** - There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.