

# Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

## **April 16, 2019 Technical Planning Committee Meeting Summary and Minutes** **9:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Location:**  
**NEPA Alliance**  
**1151 Oak Street**  
**Pittston, PA 18640**

### **Technical Planning Committee**

<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>Organization:</b>
David Bekisz*	STS	Amanda Leindecker	PennDOT District 5-0
Marie Bishop*	PennDOT District 4-0	John Malinchok*	Sch. Planning Comm.
David Bodnar*	Carbon Co. Planning	Christine Meinhart-Fritz*	Monroe Co. Planning
Matt Boyer	Commuter Services	Mike Mrozinski*	Pike Co. Planning
James Brady	STV Incorporated	Larry Shifflet	PennDOT Central
Matt Connell^	NCC Monroe	Susan Smith*	Schuylkill Co. Planning
Steve Fisher*	PennDOT District 4-0	Matt Smoker	FHWA
John Frankosky	PennDOT District 4-0	Brian Snyder*	Pike Co. Planning
Brian Funkhouser	Michael Baker Intl.	Scott Vottero	PennDOT District 5-0
Ray Green*	PennDOT Central	Tiana Williams*^	CCCT/LANTA
Micah Gursky	St. Luke's Hospital	Alan Baranski	NEPA Alliance
Doyle Heffley*^	PA House of Reps.	Jeff Box	NEPA Alliance
Kathy Henderson^	Carbon Chamber	Annette Ginocchetti	NEPA Alliance
Peggy Howarth*	MCTA	Kate McMahon	NEPA Alliance
Vanessa Koenigkramer*	PennDOT District 5-0	Daniel Yelito	NEPA Alliance
Chris Kufro	PennDOT District 5-0		

\*Committee members who voted at this meeting.

^ Participated via videoconference

### **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: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to approve the state's Performance-Based Planning and Programming Written Provisions. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: A motion to table the CMAQ discussion until May was made by Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Ms. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ms. Meinhart-Fritz called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.**

**1) Business Items**

a) Approval of minutes from the April 16, 2019 Business Meeting

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

**2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions**

a) District 4-0 and 5-0 2019-2022 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Information was included in the meeting packet which highlighted combined administrative actions on the 2019 TIP for District 4-0 and 5-0. Ms. Koenigkramer presented the administrative actions.

1) Berne Drive over Red Creek Bridge- advance 2020 funds and increase for PE supplement to submit permit and perform borings. The source is SR 3005 over Schuylkill WB construction phase. 2) 309 Resurf- Lofty Hill to McAdoo- increase construction phase to meet revised PS&E estimate for additional concrete patching. The sources are Deer Lake North and South Tamaqua Bridge deobs. 3) NEPA High Friction Surface- swap STP funds for HSIP and increase to include inspection costs as part of estimate. The source is the Safety Line Item and SR 61/209 Intersection construction phase. 4) Construction Assistance- increase for construction assistance supplement. 443 Roadway Improvements- increase to revised estimate plus year of expenditure and cash flow over multiple years to better align with anticipate need. 715 over McMichaels Creek- increase for PE supplement to address archaeology. The sources are 924 over 4030 RR & Mahanoy Crk, SR 534 over Swamp Run, Stites Tunnel Bridge and Marshalls Creek. 5) Construction Assistance- increase for construction assistance supplement. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. 6) SR 3010 over Pohopoco Creek- increase for final design supplement for additional geotechnical work. The source is SR 3005 over Schuylkill WB. 7) SR 209 over Appenzell Creek- advance and increase to cover PE plus internal costs. The source is Deer Lake North, South Tamaqua Bridge and NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. 8) US 209 over Swatara Creek- increase to cover negotiated amount for PE and internal costs. The source is Stites Tunnel Bridge and NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None.

**3) Transportation Planning & Programs**

a) Current Project Status

Ms. Howarth provided an update on MCTA Transit Projects.

Mr. Green provided an update on STS and CCCT Transit Projects.

b) Performance-Based Planning and Programming Written Provisions

Mr. Shifflet stated that PennDOT provided a letter from Jim Ritzman about the Performance-Based Planning and Programming. The NEPA MPO has previously taken action on three performance measures- PM-1 which is safety measures, PM-2 which is NHS bridge and highway performance and PM-3 which is system performance. MPOs and RPOs have adopted the statewide targets for the performance measures. The state has to report on how they are meeting the targets to FHWA. Another part of performance measures is to document how the performance measures are adopted and reported. The letter from Mr. Ritzman outlines how the targets are set and the data is reported. We can look at the

targets every two years. Mr. Baranski stated that the NEPA MPO has previously taken action to adopt the statewide measures and goals. Mr. Smoker stated that is just documenting the process for the past 18 months. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to approve the state's Performance-Based Planning and Programming Written Provisions. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

c) CMAQ Funding

Mr. Baranski stated that last year during the TIP development, the committee voted not to provide additional funding for Commuter Services. That left us with two years of CMAQ funding that is eligible to be used in all four NEPA counties. After 2020, CMAQ funding can only be used in Carbon County which is in non-attainment for air quality. We have discussed the funding available with District 5-0. We have an opportunity to either fund existing TIP projects which are CMAQ-eligible or we can do a funding round to fund smaller CMAQ projects. Mr. Kufro stated that they have a project in Monroe County which could use all of the CMAQ funds. Ms. Koenigkramer stated that there is \$248,000 in each year and it could be used on the SR 115/209 project in Monroe County.

Mr. Bodnar asked if there are projects in Carbon County that could use CMAQ funds? Mr. Koenigkramer stated that the SR 443 project has CMAQ funds on it. Mr. Baranski stated that there may be projects that are CMAQ-eligible that come out of the Jim Thorpe Study. Ms. Howarth stated that if we use it on the SR 115/209 project at least the funding will be used. Ms. Howarth asked by when the funds have to be used. Mr. Kufro stated that they have to be obligated by the end of the current TIP. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if the SR 115/209 project will be far enough along to use the funds. Mr. Kufro said it will. Mr. Mrozinski stated that they would like to see if there are any projects in Pike County that would be eligible for the funding. Mr. Fisher stated that CMAQ funding is limited in eligibility. Mr. Baranski said there is a memo in the packet that outlines the eligible uses for CMAQ funding. Mr. Boyer stated that vanpools are eligible. They had been using JARC funds but those funds will cease to exist in May. That will have an effect on a number of vans in the area.

Mr. Mrozinski asked how the funding round would work. Mr. Baranski stated that DVRPC has a funding round protocol so we could look at their process and base it on that. Mr. Fisher stated that Northern Tier did a funding round and they ended up transferring the funds to transit. Mr. Smoker stated that deliverability will be an issue. Once the funding round opens, it will be the fall before the funds will be awarded and it gives the project sponsor less than a year to deliver the project. The contracting process takes time. We have seen similar issues with local sponsors delivering projects in the Transportation Alternative program.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if Lehigh Valley does a competitive round. Mr. Smoker stated that DVRPC and SPC do funding rounds. Other planning partners work with districts and transit providers to identify projects. Many use CMAQ to replace transit buses. Mr. Leindecker stated that there is a 20% match. Mr. Green stated that he has concerns about local projects needing additional funding to deliver the project and they will come looking for TIP funds. Mr. Shifflet stated that a lot of projects that get funding are traffic signal retiming. Mr. Smoker stated that those are good projects to show emissions reductions. Mr. Fisher stated that he has concerns about eligibility. If District 5-0 has a project that is eligible and can use the funds, that may be the way to go. Ms. Leindecker stated that the SR 115/209 project could use up all of the funds since they are anticipating cost increases on both ROW and Construction. Mr. Gursky asked if NEPA has a recommendation. Mr. Baranski stated that we have an opportunity to do some smaller projects. They would have to be easy and effective but if there are any projects in mind, it is an opportunity.

Ms. Howarth asked if we can think about eligible projects over the next month and discuss it at the next meeting. Mr. Malinchok stated that we have an existing project that can use the funding and we can

guarantee that the funds are used and stay in the region. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz stated that she has concerns about the timing to obligate the funding. She thought Monroe County would be eligible to use the CMAQ funds after 2020 because of the court decision but that isn't the case. Mr. Mrozinski stated that they could come up with projects, but the issue is being able to deliver the project in time and meeting the necessary requirements may be an issue. Ms. Leindecker stated that it can take 3-6 months just to get through the contracting process.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if we can wait until the May meeting to make a decision. Mr. Baranski said that everyone can discuss the matter with others in their county and we can make a decision at the May meeting. Mr. Howarth agreed that it will give everyone a chance to think about eligible projects.

Ms. Leindecker stated that she cannot attach CMAQ funds in Schuylkill County, so she has concerns about funding a project in Schuylkill County. Schuylkill County shows up as having insufficient data. Ms. Leindecker stated that there are not air monitors in Schuylkill County currently. She wanted to use CMAQ funds on the SR 61 project but could not. Mr. Smoker stated that obligating projects in Carbon and Monroe shouldn't be a problem. He has to check on Pike County, but Schuylkill shows as having insufficient data. Ms. Smith asked about getting Schuylkill County data on air quality. Mr. Smoker stated that EPA needs five years of data before they will make a determination and go through the rulemaking process. Mr. Shifflet stated that there are concerns about trying to get air quality data since it could have negative impacts. Depending on where the air monitors are located, they could be near industrial areas and could result in impacts to businesses if issues with PM 2.5 is determined.

Ms. Smith asked if all funds for the project need to be shown on the TIP even if it is a local source. Ms. Leindecker stated that it all has to be shown on the TIP regardless of the source, so the project is shown as being fully funding. Ms. Leindecker stated that toll credits can be used and then the project is fully federally funded. If we add any projects to the TIP, it would be an amendment and would require EPA approval as well. Mr. Kufro stated that they also have to go through right of way clearance. Ms. Leindecker stated that there may be deliverability issues in the timeframe we are working in.

Ms. Smith asked about the SR 115/209 project. Adding CMAQ funds to the projects wouldn't free up another type of funds? Ms. Leindecker stated that they are facing a large increase and the CMAQ funds would go towards filling that funding gap. There are right of way issues with that project.

Ms. Howarth stated that MCTA would use all of the CMAQ funds to buy an additional bus. It would be CMAQ eligible and would be easy to complete the project. Ms. Howarth suggested that the funds being divided among the four counties. If that doesn't work out, the fallback project is the SR 115/209 project.

Mr. Bodnar stated that he doesn't think that the competitive program is worth it. Carbon County will receive all of the CMAQ funding in two years and it doesn't seem like a project in Schuylkill County can be programmed. We have a project that is eligible in Monroe County that can use all of the funds. Mr. Mrozinski stated that it seemed like an opportunity to get some smaller projects done but based on the discussion, it doesn't seem like an easy process to get the projects done. Ms. Leindecker stated that it can be done but there are a lot of hurdles to getting the projects delivered. Mr. Heffley stated that if there is a worthwhile project, we just need to work through the regulations and get it done.

A motion to table the CMAQ discussion until May was made by Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Ms. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

d) PennDOT Connects Initiative

Mr. Baranski stated that we have participated in a number of PennDOT Connects meeting on Multimodal Transportation Fund projects as well as several bridge projects and a bundle of projects in Hamilton

Township. There is also a phone call scheduled on the emergency bridge repairs on SR 940. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz stated that the Project Initiation Form stated there is no pedestrian access on the bridge but there is a Transportation Alternatives project for bike lanes on SR 940 that is ongoing. Ms. Koenigkramer stated that she will share that with the PM. Mr. Baranski stated that we still intend to do PennDOT Connects outreach and training for municipalities as part of the LRTP outreach.

e) Functional Classification Review

Ms. McMahon stated that we are moving along with our functional classification review. We have completed our review in Carbon County and are currently mapping the changes. We will finalize everything with Carbon County and then we plan to schedule a meeting with District 5-0 to review the changes shortly. Ms. Leindecker asked for potential dates so they can get something on the calendar. We hope to complete the functional classification review by the summer.

f) Jim Thorpe Parking Study/Complete Streets Analysis

Mr. Baranski stated that he received a schedule for completion of the study. They had a meeting in 5-0 to go over some of the potential treatments suggested in the study. They got some good feedback and they are tightening up some of the treatments. We should conclude the study shortly and will have some good projects to seek funding for in the future.

g) Commuter Services Update

Ms. Boyer stated that Earth Day is coming up. Bike Month is in May. They are working with Hollander, Sanofi and Great Wolf. They did a presentation at the Schuylkill County Courthouse and another one to Rep. Knowles and Senator Argall. About a year ago, they changed data collection software. Users are self-reporting their trips now. The program funding from NEPA currently has them operating for another 12-15 months.

h) 2021-2024 TIP Update

Mr. Baranski stated that they are wrapping up the Financial Guidance for the TIP update. Procedural Guidance will be developed next. There is a Planning Partners meeting in June. Mr. Shifflet stated it is tentatively scheduled for June 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be a discussion among all of the planning partners. It will provide the roadmap for the TIP update process. The schedule will be a little earlier than in previous TIP update years. Mr. Baranski stated that the STC is taking input on the Twelve Year Program update. They are currently receiving comments until the end of May.

**4) Presentation**

Mr. Shifflet provided a presentation on the Transportation Advisory Committee study on Risks to Transportation Funding. A copy of the presentation is attached.

**5) NEPA MPO Strategic Plan Review**

Mr. Funkhouser provided a presentation on the draft NEPA MPO Strategic Plan. Mr. Funkhouser stated that they have incorporated the changes on the plan that they have received to this point. Mr. Shifflet commended the committee for undertaking the strategic plan effort. Mr. Baranski stated that the committee can take an action to endorse the plan now and refer it to the Policy Board for action at their May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Ms. Howarth stated that she would like to review the edits that have been made and take action at the May meeting. Mr. Baranski stated that we could take action at the May Technical Committee meeting. The July Policy Board meeting is scheduled for July 3<sup>rd</sup> and that date will likely not hold. We will look to reschedule for later in July. Mr. Baranski stated that the Policy Board can consider the Strategic Plan by email ballot. That will give everyone more time to review the changes. It was agreed that the committee will review the latest draft and send any comments in by April 26<sup>th</sup>. The Technical Committee will then take action on it at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, followed by an email ballot by the Policy Board. We will then start the update of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

**6) Other Business**

Mr. Baranski stated that we got a letter forwarded from District 5-0 from Rep. Heffley and Senator Yudichak about the condition of SR 443. There is a project programmed on the TIP, but they would like to move it up. We will consider that request as part of the TIP update process.

Ms. Smith asked about the Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors. Mr. Smoker stated that they were approved by FHWA. They are working on mapping them now.

**7) Adjournment**

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.