

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

May 22, 2019 Technical Planning Committee Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location:

SEDCO

Union Station

300 South Centre Street, 2nd Floor

Pottsville, PA

Technical Planning Committee

Attendees:

David Bekisz*
David Bodnar*
Matt Boyer
John Christy*
Brendan Cotter*
Steve Fisher*
Brian Funkhouser
Ray Green*
Micah Gursky
Doyle Heffley*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Amanda Leindecker
Jamie Lemon
Ethan MacDonald
John Malinchok*

Organization:

STS
Carbon Co. Planning
Commuter Services
Monroe Co. Comm.
CCCT/LANTA
PennDOT District 4-0
Michael Baker Intl.
PennDOT Central
St. Luke's Hospital
PA House of Reps.
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
Michael Baker Intl.
PennDOT District 4-0
Sch. Planning Comm.

Attendees:

Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*
Emma Pugh
Jason Skrimcovsky
Susan Smith*
Brian Snyder*
Christine Verdier
Scott Vottero

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Kate McMahan
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

Monroe Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 4-0
Carbon Co. Planning
Schuylkill Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
Sen. Argall's Office
PennDOT District 5-0

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: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to approve the minutes from the April 16, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to endorse the NEPA MPO Strategic Plan and refer to the Policy Board for their approval. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Green. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Mr. Gursky to send letters to our legislative delegation about the anticipated cuts to transportation funding including specific project information. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 4: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion to apply the CMAQ funds to the 209/115 intersection project ROW phase. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Mr. Green. 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 April 16, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. 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.

Interstate Informational Item 1) I-80 WB from I 380 to SR 115- increase to cover patching adjustments, address pothole patching and reinstallation of shoulder milled rumble strips. I-380 from I-80 to SR 940- increase to cover additional bridge, roadway and shoulder repairs and MPT/mobilization adjustments. The source is the State Highway Reserve. Administrative Action 1) I-80 WB from I 380 to SR 115- add federal emergency relief funds and state match to cover advance construct amount. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Administrative Action 2) 309 Resurf-Lofty Hill to McAdoo- increase construction phase to meet low bid adjustment. The sources are Hamilton West Resurface 33 to 80, Deer Lake North and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 2) I-80 Rehabilitation- increase construction phase due to additional work and inspection costs. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 3) I-80/Exit 308 Alignment- increase ROW to cover additional relocations. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 1) Summit Avenue RRXing Upgrade- advance funding for obligation. The source is the RRX Reserve Line Item. Administrative Action 3) Delivery Consultant Assistance- increase to supplement for consultant PM assistance. The sources are 309 McAdoo and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status

Mr. Fisher provided an update on Transportation Alternative Set Aside, Multimodal Transportation Fund and Appalachian Regional Commission projects in District 4-0.

Mr. Vottero provided an update on Transportation Alternative Set Aside, Multimodal Transportation Fund and Appalachian Regional Commission projects in District 5-0.

b) NEPA MPO Strategic Plan Endorsement

Mr. Baranski stated that we have drafted a Strategic Plan with the assistance of Michael Baker International. We have had a draft of the plan available for several weeks. We have gotten feedback from Technical Committee and Policy Board members. We incorporated the changes into the draft document and shared it with everyone. At this point, we are seeking an endorsement from the Technical

Committee so it can be referred to the Policy Board for their approval. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Committee to endorse the NEPA MPO Strategic Plan and refer to the Policy Board for their approval. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Green. The motion passed unanimously.

c) NEPA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Baranski stated we are beginning the update our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Michael Baker International will be the consultant for the LRTP update. We will be kicking off the update of the LRTP following the conclusion of the Technical Committee meeting.

d) 2021-2024 TIP Update

Mr. Baranski stated that we are proceeding with the development of the TIP update. There are several guidance committees that are engaged to develop the TIP update. Mr. Baranski sits on the Financial Guidance Work Group and they are wrapping up the Financial Guidance for the TIP update. Procedural Guidance will also be developed. Both of those documents will be available at the Planning Partners meeting on June 11th. Mr. Baranski stated that the financial outlook for the TIP update is not good but we will have more details after June 11th. The new financial guidance will be available for our LRTP update. Ms. Smith asked if there will be any major changes in the financial guidance for the TIP update. Mr. Baranski stated that with performance measures, there are standards that PennDOT has to meet, particularly on the interstates. We anticipate a shift in funding to the interstates which will leave less funding for the local TIPs. We won't learn the numbers until after the Planning Partners meetings. Ms. Leindecker stated that it will be challenging. Mr. Green stated that the details are not out but we can anticipate less funding. Mr. Malinchok stated that the state is looking at a surplus this year. Maybe the finding can be put towards the local TIPs. Mr. Baranski stated that he hopes that the legislature will look at the transportation funding issue and take action. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if there anything that the MPO can do. Mr. Green stated that the MPO can advocate with their representatives for additional transportation funding. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if staff should put language together to advocate to our legislators. Mr. Baranski stated that PennDOT is developing a message about the funding issues. The federal legislators need to take action to raise transportation funding at the federal level. Ms. Smith asked if the staff can develop letters to the legislative delegation about the issue at the state and federal level. The chambers of commerce have been pushing for transportation funding as well. Mr. Gursky stated that the letters need to be specific. It would be helpful to list specific projects that will not be advanced without an increase in funding. Mr. Box stated that we all know the problems but PennDOT and the Governor need to get the message out to the general public. They don't understand why the gas tax is the highest but we have terrible roads. Mr. Christy stated that it is because the gas tax supports the state police. Mr. Baranski stated that it is difficult to draft a letter with specific projects listed because we don't know at this point how they will be affected. Ms. Leindecker stated that we can't say how the projects will shift. Mr. Christy suggested looking at the projects currently programmed in each county or legislative district and stating that those projects are in danger of losing funding. Rep. Heffley suggested that the cuts need to be quantified in order to be effective. Mr. Baranski stated that we cannot quantify the cuts at this point. Rep. Heffley stated that everyone is looking at the budget surplus and there are a lot options on the table for it including the raining day fund. The issue with TIP funding seems to be a separate issue. Ms. Smith stated that we could look at the projects in the LRTP and state that those projects may never get done due to a lack of funding. Mr. Baranski stated that those projects will definitely be affected as well as any new needs that are identified in the LRTP update. Ms. McMahon suggested looking at the projects in the second and third four years of the TYP. Those projects are a little more developed than the projects in the LRTP. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Mr. Gursky to send letters to our legislative delegation about the anticipated cuts to transportation funding including specific project information. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked when we would send the letters. Ms. Smith stated that we probably need to wait until we know what the cuts will be. Ms. McMahon stated that even if we have a percentage amount that would be good. Ms.

Meinhart-Fritz asked to have a draft of the letter for the next meeting. Rep. Heffley stated that after the passage of Act 89, there is not an appetite for another tax increase. With the increase of alternative fuel vehicles that are not paying gas taxes, there may be an effort to look at other ways for those vehicles to pay.

e) Milford Traffic Study Funding

Mr. Baranski stated that we received supplemental planning funds from PennDOT for the Milford Traffic Study. We received \$60,000 and will have a \$15,000 local match. A steering committee will be developed and a decision about a consultant will be made. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if the local match will come from the county. Mr. Mrozinski stated that it is yet to be determined. We would like to get some match from the borough and will also approach the Visitors' Bureau for funding.

f) CMAQ Funding

Mr. Baranski stated that we had an extensive discussion about CMAQ funding at the last meeting. We have just under \$500,000 in funding available on the current TIP. We considered funding small projects. There is an issue with county eligibility due to air quality data. Since that discussion, we have gotten clarification from FHWA about using CMAQ funds and they have determined that the funds cannot be used in Pike or Schuylkill counties. They can only be used in Carbon and Monroe counties. The funds can be used on eligible existing projects or new projects. District 5-0 has stated that they could use the funds on the SR 209/115 intersection project. There is an increase in the right-of-way phased and the CMAQ funds could be put towards that project. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion to apply the CMAQ funds to the 209/115 intersection project ROW phase. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Mr. Green. The motion passed unanimously.

g) Commuter Services

Mr. Gursky asked what sources of funding are available for Commuter Services besides CMAQ funding. They have utilized their services at St. Luke's. Mr. Baranski stated that Commuter Services is continuing until their current funding runs out. Mr. Boyer stated that at their current rate of spending they have another 12-15 months. Mr. Boyer stated that other counties are allocating STP funds to Commuter Services. Those funds are highly sought-after funds. Mr. Green stated that STP funds can be used but it is a small pot of funds. Mr. Boyer stated that employers can continue to direct their employees to Commuter Services. They will no longer have staffing resources to visit employers and promote their services.

Mr. Boyer stated that they have done events for Earth Day in April. May is National Bike Month which is now called Motorless Month. A lot of organizations and employers do events around these themes. They will have events in June for Try Transit Month. They have done events at Johnson and Johnson in Monroe County and nonprofit events in Carbon County. They have done new hire events at the Walmart Distribution Center as well as events at Northeast Prestressed and Lehigh Carbon Community College.

h) PennDOT Connects Initiative

Mr. Baranski stated that the PennDOT Connects meetings continue. We had several with the Multimodal Transportation Fund project meetings. We still plan to do outreach on PennDOT Connects during the LRTP outreach efforts.

i) Functional Classification Review

Ms. McMahon stated that we have a meeting set up with Carbon County and PennDOT District 5-0 on June 13th in Allentown to go over the changes we are proposing in Carbon County. We are meeting with the Carbon County staff ahead of that meeting. We will continue the process in Schuylkill County after that.

j) Jim Thorpe Parking Study/Complete Streets Analysis

Mr. Baranski stated that the project is winding down. The consultant has put their recommendations into a report. They will present to the Steering Committee and the county commissioners. The meeting with the steering committee will be a public meeting. The consultant will also present to the MPO Committee when the project is complete.

k) 2019-2020 Meeting Dates

Ms. McMahon stated that we have put together the list of meeting dates for 2019-2020. We are not sure about the meeting date for the October meeting because the meeting falls during a PennDOT Planning Partners conference. The PPA conference is also in October. We will send out a Doodle poll to everyone to find a date in October that works best.

4) Other Business

Mr. Baranski stated that we are looking at doing an inventory of ADA ramps as the next part of our asset inventory. Mr. Yelito has identified ADA coordinators in each county. We will contact the coordinators before we deploy in their county and also work with them to identify attributes to be collected in the inventory.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.