

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

November 2, 2016 Policy Board Meeting Summary and Minutes

2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location:
NEPA Alliance Office
1151 Oak St
Pittston, PA 18640

Attendees:

Matt Connell*
Steve Fisher
Micah Gursky*
Kathy Henderson*
Fred Suljic*

Organization:

Northampton Community Col.
PennDOT District 4-0
St. Luke's Hosp.
CCEDC
Pike County (via conf.call)

NEPA Staff:

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Kate McMahan

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*Committee members who voted at this meeting.

Summary of Actions Taken by the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee

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

Action 1: Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the July 6, 2016 NEPA MPO Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

Action 2: Dr. Connell requested a motion to adopt the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. A motion was made by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Gursky and passed unanimously.

Dr. Connell called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1) Business Items

a) Approval of Minutes from the NEPA MPO Policy Board July 6, 2015 Meeting- Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the July 6, 2016 NEPA MPO Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

2) Transportation Planning and Programs

- a) Adoption of the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan - Mr. Baranski stated that the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Plan was part of the update of major MPO documents including the Public Involvement Plan. The Coordinated Transit plan was completed in draft form in June. Additional meetings were held with stakeholders to review the draft plan. The draft plan has been reviewed by the Technical Planning Committee and recommended at their September 20, 2016 meeting for approval to the Policy Board. Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve adoption of the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Plan. A motion was made by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Gursky and pass unanimously.
- b) 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program - Mr. Baranski reported that the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program was submitted to PennDOT in July. It was combined with the TIPs from around the state and submitted to the State Transportation Commission (STC). The STC approved the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and it was approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The 2017-2020 TIP went

into effect on October 1, 2016. In a few months, PennDOT and the Planning Partners will begin discussing the next TIP update. Dr. Connell requested information regarding the air quality determination and how NEPA is in non-conformity as part of the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton area? Mr. Baranski stated that Carbon County is part of the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton airshed and as a result, we receive Air Quality Conformity funding which can be spent throughout the MPO region.

- c) US DOT Proposed Rulemaking on MPO Coordinated and Planning Area Reform - Mr. Baranski stated that this proposed rulemaking was first issued in late June. NEPA provided comments on the proposed rulemaking at that time along with our neighboring MPOs. Mr. Baranski stated that the proposed rulemaking affects the NEPA MPO because we share urbanized areas with several of our neighboring MPOs. The rulemaking could require the MPOs to develop shared TIPs and Long Range Plans. The comment period on the proposed rulemaking was reopened in October to request additional information from stakeholders. NEPA again submitted comments on the proposed rulemaking. Mr. Baranski stated that Congressman Bill Shuster, the chairman of the House Transportation Committee has come out in opposition to the rulemaking. Mr. Gursky stated that the 2010 Census greatly increased urbanized areas. The urbanized area designations affect other programs besides transportation. Mr. Baranski stated that the proposed rulemaking requires MPOs to project where the urbanized area will be for the next 20 years. Mr. Baranski stated that we are waiting to see what the final rulemaking looks like.
- d) PennDOT Connects Initiative - Mr. Baranski reported that PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards has initiated the PennDOT Connect Initiative to increase local involvement and input into the project development process earlier in the process. It requires that features such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, stormwater infrastructure, trail connections, etc. be considered as part of the project development process. The initiative will roll out this spring. Dr. Connell asked if this will look at the project in a holistic way? Mr. Baranski said yes. Dr. Connell asked how it will be shared with the local municipalities? Mr. Baranski stated that there will be outreach and training for the local officials, especially in areas where there are upcoming transportation projects. Dr. Connell asked how it will affect current projects on the TIP? Mr. Fisher stated that some of the projects on the TIP will be affected but it will definitely affect new projects on the next TIP. Dr. Connell stated that this process may add time to a project? Mr. Baranski stated that those issues are being addressed and a formal policy is being developed. Mr. Baranski stated that the Planning Partners have participated in executive sessions with PennDOT and has had input into the process. Dr. Connell stated that there may be concerns from the locals about the PennDOT Connect process just delaying projects or increasing costs that will be passed down to the municipality. Mr. Baranski stated that those are definitely concerns and they need to be addressed. Mr. Suljic stated that it provides an opportunity for local municipalities to get involved but it will also require input from the county planning directors and county planning commissions.
- e) Critical Urban Freight Corridor and Critical Rural Freight Corridor Designations - Mr. Baranski reported that these freight corridors are part of the National Freight Network as established as part of the FAST Act. The Interstates are already part of the National Freight Network. PennDOT has tasked the Planning Partners with providing recommendations for the urban and rural freight corridors to connect freight generators with the interstates. We will be coordinating with the county planners to identify candidates for the designation of the freight corridors. Mr. Baranski stated that there is a statewide cap on the number of miles that can be designated. Dr. Connell asked what the designations will mean? Mr. Baranski stated that there is funding available for the roadway improvements that are designated as part of the National Freight Network. Mr. Box asked who will apply for the funding? Mr. Fisher stated that it may be like the Interstate Program where funding will be determined at the statewide level.
- f) Commuter Services - Mr. Baranski stated that Commuter Services has hired two individuals who operate within the MPO counties. They have been active with meeting with employers, getting rideshare signups and coordinating with the transit agencies. Mr. Baranski stated that we have discussed having an event to highlight Commuter Services.
- g) Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Update - Ms. McMahon stated that information was included in the meeting packet that summarizes the last year's LTAP activity. We provide LTAP services in the seven-county NEPA region, not just the MPO counties. We are doing really well, especially compared to our counterparts across the state. We hold a lot of classes and have very good attendance. Mr. Gursky asked how we have been

successful? Ms. McMahon stated that our marketing strategy for the program is very good. We mail, fax and email information to our municipalities about the classes. We also put information out on our social media sites. It also helps to have Daniel out in the field because he meets with the municipal officials and shares information about LTAP. Ms. McMahon stated that we take requests from the municipalities. Dr. Connell asked who attends the classes? Ms. McMahon stated that it mostly municipal road crew. Some of the classes are at a higher level and they are mostly attended by the roadmasters. Dr. Connell asked who teaches the classes? Ms. McMahon stated that the classes are taught by a variety of instructors. Some of them are engineers, some are former roadmasters. Dr. Connell asked if the attendance has been consistent? Ms. McMahon stated that our attendance has been fairly consistent. We have to have a minimum of 10 people to hold the class and attendance is capped at 30. Mr. Gursky asked if we hold classes in every county? Ms. McMahon stated that we do. We tend to hold more classes in Lackawanna and Luzerne County because there are more municipalities and they have bigger road crews but we hold two classes in every county per year.

- h) PennDOT Grant Programs Update - Ms. McMahon stated that PennDOT's Multimodal Transportation Fund is currently accepting applications for funding. It will be open until December 16th. We shared some information with our committee members and we will put it out in our quarterly newsletter. We are still waiting for decisions on the Transportation Alternatives Program.

3) Other Business

The next meeting of the NEPA MPO Policy Board is scheduled for January 4, 2017 at approximately 2pm.

4) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.