

# Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

## November 6, 2019 Policy Board Meeting Summary and Minutes

2:00 p.m.

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

<b><u>Attendees:</u></b>	<b><u>Organization:</u></b>	<b><u>NEPA Staff:</u></b>	
Matt Connell*^	Northampton Community Coll.	Alan Baranski	NEPA Alliance
Ray Green*	PennDOT Central	Jeff Box	NEPA Alliance
Micah Gursky*	St. Luke's Hospital	Kate McMahan	NEPA Alliance
Kathy Henderson*	CCEDC		

\*Committee members who voted at this meeting.

^Participated by phone

### **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 March 6, 2019 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 confirm the email ballot of June 17, 2019 to approve the NEPA MPO Strategic Plan. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

Dr. Connell called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

### **Meeting Minutes**

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

a) Approval of Minutes from the NEPA MPO Policy Board March 6, 2019 Meeting

Mr. Baranski stated that although we held a Policy Board meeting on July 24, 2019, we had technical difficulties with the recording of the meeting and were unable to transcribe meeting minutes. As a result, we are requesting that the Policy Board retake the actions that were taken at the July meeting, so they are recorded properly.

Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the March 6, 2019 NEPA MPO Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

b) Confirmation of the Email Ballot of June 17, 2019 to Approve of the NEPA MPO Strategic Plan

Dr. Connell requested a motion to confirm the email ballot of June 17, 2019 to approve the NEPA MPO Strategic Plan. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

#### **2) Transportation Planning and Programs**

a) 2021-2024 TIP Update

Mr. Baranski stated that the 2021-2024 TIP development is underway. At the last meeting, we discussed the funding constraints we are under with the development of this TIP update. There is a shift in funding from the

regional TIPs to the Interstate TIP. We had a meeting in District 5-0 to review the current TIP projects and their status and what projects will carryover onto the new TIP. We also met with District 4-0 earlier this week to discuss the status of projects in Pike County. We have another meeting scheduled in District 5-0 next week to determine how carryover projects will fit in with the current TIP funding allocation. We hope there will be additional transportation funding either at the federal level or state level but in the meantime, we must work within the current funding levels. It is anticipated that projects will get pushed out or will get broken into phases to keep them moving. The District 5-0 and 4-0 TIPs will get reconciled and will be submitted to Central Office by the end of the year. We have not seen any Spike funding yet. Mr. Green stated that a decision will be made in the next few weeks about Spike funding, but they do not anticipate a large amount of funding.

Mr. Baranski stated that we are participating in a panel that Senator Argall is convening in Berks County. It will be conducted on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Box asked if there is any more information. Mr. Green stated that the Reading MPO is also participating, as well as District 5-0 and Central Office. Mr. Gursky suggested reaching out to Senator Argall's office for more information, but he suspects they are looking for information about specific project impacts. Mr. Baranski stated that is likely and we anticipate that as well. We're still working through the TIP development, so it is difficult to know the impacts. We plan to develop a memo about the impacts when we know what they are and will share it with our legislators.

b) 2020-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development

Mr. Baranski stated that we are in the process of developing our two-year work program. We are working with our UPWP Subcommittee to develop the plan. The Technical Committee will endorse the draft UPWP at the November meeting and we will submit it to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their review. FHWA is taking a different approach this year. They want to review each draft UPWP upfront and provide comments before they are approved. Once the Technical Committee reviews the draft UPWP at the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, we will submit it to FHWA. They have 30 days to review the document. The FHWA reviewer sits on the Technical Committee so he has been part of the plan development. We anticipate an action by the Policy Board at the January meeting.

c) NEPA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Baranski stated that we held Long Range Transportation Plan listening sessions in each of the MPO counties. We had a good turnout at each of the outreach sessions. The legislators and county planners helped get the word out. We also conducted an online survey for individuals to identify transportation issues for consideration as potential projects. We have a full list of projects from our last Long Range Transportation Plan that will carry over onto the updated plan. The plan development will continue for the next few months with adoption by March. We will provide an update at the January meeting.

Mr. Gursky asked if the passenger rail project is in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Ms. McMahon stated that it has been identified in the plan. Mr. Baranski stated that it is in the plan as a placeholder and would require a New Starts application at the federal level. Mr. Box asked who would make that application. Mr. Baranski stated it would be a joint effort between our MPO and Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO. Mr. Gursky stated that putting it front and center of the plan cannot hurt and would emphasize its importance.

d) Functional Classification Review

Mr. Baranski stated that we are moving along with our functional classification review. We have completed our review in Pike, Monroe and Carbon counties. Our review is underway in Schuylkill County. We had an initial meeting there with the county planner and GIS and EMA personnel. We are required to submit the functional classification changes as one package. Mr. Box asked how the changes impact funding. Mr. Baranski stated that it changes the eligibility of certain types of funds. Ms. McMahon stated that it can also add roads to the federal aid system to allow for federal funds to be used on that roadway. All of the changes have to go through FHWA. We may not get all of the changes that we submit approved.

e) Milford Borough Traffic Study

Mr. Baranski stated that we are refining the scope of services for the project. We did have a conference call with representatives from Milford Borough and the consultant, Michael Baker International to review the scope for the

project. It will be similar to the Jim Thorpe study and will review traffic issues, congestion, parking, pedestrian and bicycle use, etc. We anticipate the study to go for about a year so we can look at the activity during all seasons.

f) Jim Thorpe Parking Study and Complete Streets Evaluation Project Funding

Mr. Baranski stated that we have a complete draft of the report. It will go out to the Steering Committee for their final review and then it will be wrapped up. The team will be presenting on the project tomorrow in Allentown at the Pennsylvania Parking Association conference. It will be a panel discussion with Chief Schatz, Dennis Toomey, formerly with PennDOT, and the complete streets consultant from Traffic Planning & Design. Mr. Box asked if there is any consensus on the recommendations. Mr. Baranski stated that there will be a taskforce created to work on implementing the recommendations from the plan.

**3) Other Business**

None.

**4) Adjournment**

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.