

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

March 1, 2017 Policy Board Meeting Summary and Minutes

2:00 p.m.

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

| <u>Attendees:</u> | <u>Organization:</u> | <u>NEPA Staff:</u> | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Matt Connell* | Northampton Community Col. | Alan Baranski | NEPA Alliance |
| Ray Green* | PennDOT Central (via phone) | Jeff Box | NEPA Alliance |
| Micah Gursky* | St. Luke's Hosp. | Nettie Ginocchetti | NEPA Alliance |
| Kathy Henderson* | CCEDC | | |

*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 November 2, 2016 NEPA MPO Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Gursky and passed unanimously.

Action 2: Dr. Connell requested a motion to adopt the NEPA MPO Title VI Policy. A motion to approve the NEPA MPO Title VI Policy 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 November 2, 2016 Meeting- Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the November 2, 2016 NEPA MPO Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Gursky and passed unanimously.

2) Transportation Planning and Programs

- a) NEPA MPO Title VI Review and Policy/Plan Adoption - Mr. Baranski stated that we underwent a Title VI review in January with PennDOT to ensure Title VI compliance which includes outreach to minority and underserved groups. The Title VI plan was one of the documents that was recently updated and approved. The document was found to be in compliance but there were a few issues that needed to be addresses. The Title VI reviewer did request that a separate action be taken to approve the plan. Last year, the Title VI plan was approved as part of the Public Involvement Plan. The NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee took action on it at the February 21, 2017 meeting to recommend that the Policy Board approve the plan. Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the NEPA MPO Title VI Policy. A motion to approve the NEPA MPO Title VI Policy was made by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Gursky and passed unanimously.
- b) 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 have been working with the Technical Committee to identify candidates for these designations. An online GIS map has been created by NEPA GIS staff that identifies top freight generators and the corridors to connect them to the interstate. Mr. Baranski provided a demonstration of the online map. The recommendations for rural and urban freight corridors will be submitted to PennDOT for consideration. If they are designated, the roadways will be eligible for funding under the FAST Act. Mr. Baranski stated that there is a statewide cap on the total number of miles that can be designated. We anticipate that there will be some equitable distribution but we likely won't get all of the miles that we submit. Mr. Gursky asked if we know how many miles we are submitting? Ms. Ginocchetti stated that we are currently measuring the mileage that we are submitting to PennDOT. Mr. Baranski stated that over 800 miles for rural freight corridors have already been submitted. Mr. Gursky asked when the deadline for submission is? Mr. Baranski stated that we will submit our recommendations in the next week. Mr. Baranski stated that we have been in contact with our neighboring MPOs. We're submitting a short segment to assist the Lackawanna-Luzerne MPO make the connection for one of their industrial parks.

- c) 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. The PennDOT Connects policy was issued in December. It applies to projects on the TIP that have not begun preliminary engineering. We're currently working with the districts as this policy rolls out. We'll be contacting the local officials to discuss any projects in their municipality and see if there are other improvements that should be incorporated into a project. It makes sense to incorporate other needs into a project early in the process.
- d) Functional Classification Review – Mr. Baranski stated that we expect to be getting into this process in the spring and summer. It involves a review of the current functional classification of our roadways to see if they still make sense. We'll be starting in Pike County. At the next Technical Planning Committee meeting in March, Matt Smoker, our FHWA representative will present an overview on functional classification. We'll also be in discussion with our adjoining MPOs to ensure that roadways that cross county lines are consistent in their classification. Mr. Gursky asked if we expect a lot of roadways' classification to change? Mr. Baranski stated that we do expect to have some changes since a comprehensive review hasn't been done since the 1990s. The different classifications do require different design standards so we have to keep that in mind when making any changes. Any changes have to be justified with data as well. Mr. Green asked about Wayne County's role in this process? Mr. Baranski stated that we will coordinate with Wayne County. Craig Rickard, the county planner from Wayne County, participated in the meeting in December that we had with our adjoining MPOs. We'll be coordinating with Wayne County as this process moves forward to make sure there aren't any gaps in the classification.
- e) US DOT Proposed Rulemaking on MPO Coordinated and Planning Area Reform - Mr. Baranski stated that the proposed rulemaking that was first issued last summer was finalized in December. The rulemaking could require the MPOs to develop shared TIPs and Long Range Plans. With the incoming administration, there has been an effort to take action at the Congressional level to repeal the rule. NEPA sent letters to our Congressional delegation in support of repealing the rule. We are expecting Congressional action to be taken in the near future.
- f) Commuter Services - Mr. Baranski stated that Commuter Services continues to generate sign ups of individuals and companies in the program. We anticipate a report from Commuter Services on their efforts in the near future.
- g) Transportation Alternatives Milford Sidewalk and Pedestrian Lighting Project Funding- Mr. Baranski stated that the Transportation Alternates projects were announced. Milford Borough received \$514,000 for sidewalk and lighting upgrades. Three other projects from the MPO region were submitted but were not funded. They will be able to resubmit during the next TA round which should open in the coming months.
- h) Jim Thorpe Parking Study and Complete Streets Evaluation Project Funding- Mr. Baranski stated that we received competitive funding for a parking study and complete streets evaluation for Jim Thorpe. Mr. Gursky asked where the local funding will come from? Mr. Baranski stated that we have been in touch with the Pocono

Mountains Visitors' Bureau, Jim Thorpe Borough and the Carbon County Chamber. Everyone recognizes the need for additional parking in Jim Thorpe. With the new pedestrian bridge in Jim Thorpe, we expect additional visitors to Jim Thorpe. The pedestrian bridge has been in the works for some time and has received Transportation Alternatives funding. Ms. Henderson stated that the pedestrian bridge will connect the D&L Trail through the entire Carbon County. Mr. Baranski stated that we will be bringing on a consultant to do the study since it requires expertise.

3) Other Business

The next meeting of the NEPA MPO Policy Board is scheduled for May 3, 2017 at approximately 2pm.

4) Adjournment

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