

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

March 6, 2019 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 Coll.	Alan Baranski	NEPA Alliance
Brian Funkhouser^	Michael Baker International	Jeff Box	NEPA Alliance
Ray Green*	PennDOT Central	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:

Action1: Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the July 17, 2018 NEPA MPO Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Green, 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 Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board July 17, 2018 Meeting
Dr. Connell requested a motion to approve the July 17, 2018 NEPA MPO Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Henderson and passed unanimously.

2) Transportation Planning and Programs

- a) NEPA MPO Strategic Plan
Mr. Baranski stated that at the end of last year, we put out an RFQ for a consultant to assist with the development of planning documents including a Strategic Plan and the update of our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Following presentations from consultants in November, Michael Baker International was engaged in an open-end agreement to assist with these plans. The Strategic Plan process is intended to inform committee members about the policies and processes of the transportation program and identify priorities for the NEPA MPO Work Program, TIP and LRTP. In February, we held a kickoff meeting for the development of the Strategic Plan with the Technical Committee. Mr. Funkhouser stated that the Strategic Plan is a five-step process. We conducted a SWOT analysis at the kickoff meeting. A survey went out to the MPO committee members last week. A reminder will go out to the group to encourage the members to complete the survey. The deadline is this Friday. The survey will help frame out the MPO Board Retreat which is scheduled for March 19th. The results of the survey will help determine the direction of the retreat. It will be a four-hour retreat with a working lunch. At the retreat, we will develop action items for the Strategic Plan. A draft plan will be presented at the April 16th Technical Committee meeting. Depending of comments, we can approve the plan at that meeting or at the May

meeting. Mr. Baranski stated that when the Strategic Plan is completed, we will move into the update of our Long Range Transportation Plan with the help of Michael Baker International. Our LRTP update is due in March 2020. We are on a four-year cycle. The development of the plan should be smoother since it is an update of our first plan. We hope the plan will be a little more concise and user-friendly. We have to incorporate performance measures into the LRTP. There are goals for different aspects of the transportation program. Mr. Green asked when the draft Strategic Plan will be available and who will review the plan. Will FHWA review the plan. Mr. Baranski stated that we will share the plan with our FHWA representative Matt Smoker and allow him to comment on it. All of the MPO Committee members will have the opportunity to review the plan. We will work with Mr. Funkhouser to get the draft plan to everyone prior to the April 16th meeting so they have time to offer comments on it. If we receive a lot of comments, we will delay approval of the plan until May.

b) PennDOT Connects Initiative

Mr. Baranski stated that we continue to be engaged with the PennDOT Districts and local stakeholders on upcoming PennDOT projects. It continues to be a good exercise to engage with the stakeholders and discuss potential disruptions from projects and also incorporate local concerns into projects. We plan to do outreach meetings with local officials to educate them on the PennDOT Connects process. We think it makes sense to tie the PennDOT Connects training with our LRTP outreach. Combining the outreach will make it more relevant to our target audience. We expect that to happen this summer.

c) 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. We have engaged county planning and GIS staff during this process. We have met with PennDOT District 4-0 staff to go over the changes in Pike County to get their concurrence and also met with District 5-0 to go over the changes in Monroe County. We will review the changes in Carbon County with PennDOT District 5-0 as well and will then move on to Schuylkill County. We expect to wrap up the review this summer. It will then be packaged and sent to PennDOT Central Office for their review and then submitted to FHWA. Ms. Henderson asked if the development on SR 940 near the PA Turnpike Interchange was discussed. There are two different 1 million sq. ft. developments underway. They applied for a RACP grant for the project. Mr. Baranski stated that the project did come up during discussion. Ms. Henderson stated that there is also a developer who is planning a project at the intersection of Rt. 209 and Rt. 93 in Nesquehoning but he is having problems getting approval from PennDOT. They are requiring a lot of improvements for the HOP. There was already a restaurant in that location. Ms. Henderson stated that she is working to try to get the project moving forward. Mr. Baranski stated that the HOP process could be a point of discussion at the Strategic Plan retreat. Ms. Henderson asked where she can go for assistance with the roadway improvements. Mr. Green stated that the TIP would be an option but that would take time. Ms. McMahon stated that the Multimodal Transportation Fund might be an option depending what improvements are required. DCED's Multimodal Program is open right now and goes through the summer. PennDOT's Multimodal Program just closed so it won't open again for a while. Mr. Green suggested that a Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB) loan might be an option. They are loan interest loans for infrastructure improvements. Ms. Henderson asked who would apply for a PIB loan. Mr. Green stated that the county could apply. He will send information to Ms. Henderson about the program.

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

Mr. Baranski stated that the study is wrapping up. A meeting with PennDOT District 5-0 is scheduled to review some of the recommended treatments. They need to make sure that any proposed improvements are consistent with PennDOT regulations. The county commissioners have an office building with a parking garage underway. There is also the trail project that goes through the county parking lot to connect the D&L trail. The study should wrap up in April and a presentation will be held during a Technical Committee meeting.

e) Milford Borough Traffic Study

Milford Borough and Pike County officials have expressed interest in conducting a traffic congestion and parking study. Staff met with borough elected officials and Pike County Planning staff in January to discuss the proposed scope of the study. The study would potentially address traffic circulation and congestion issues in Milford. The Staff submitted an application for Supplemental Planning Study funding to PennDOT Central Office at the end of

February. Matching funds will be pursued from local sources including the county and the borough. We hope to hear back on the application in the next month or two.

f) I-95 Corridor Coalition Freight Academy

Mr. Baranski stated that Ms. McMahon will be attending the Freight Academy at Rutgers University in New Jersey at the beginning of April. It is a competitive program that required an application and approval process. It is a week-long immersive program that covers all aspects of freight and includes several field visits. With all of the freight issues in our region stemming from the increase in warehousing and distribution centers, it makes sense for Ms. McMahon to attend.

3) Other Business

4) Adjournment

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