

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

April 19, 2022 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location:

Microsoft Teams Videoconference

Attendees:

David Alas*
Dave Bekisz*
David Bodnar*
Jim Brady
Annie Butkiewicz
John Christy*
Brendan Cotter*
Brian Funkhouser
Marta Gabriel
Nathan Gerace
Micah Gursky
Doyle Heffley*
Kathy Henderson
Crystal Heshmat
Peggy Howarth*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Amanda Leindecker
Chuck Leonard
John Malinchok

Organization:

PennDOT Central
STS
Carbon Co. Planning
STV
Michael Baker Intl.
Mon. Co. Commissioner
LANTA
Michael Baker Intl.
Sen. Toomey's Office
Rep. Meuser's Office
St. Luke's Hospital
State Representative
CCEDC
PennDOT Central
MCTA
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
PMEDC
Schuy. Planning Comm.

Attendees:

Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
John Petrini
Emma Pugh*
Alfred Picca
Jeff Rai
Mike Rebert
Rich Roman
Dave Rostron
Susan Smith*
Matt Smoker
Brian Snyder*
Scott Vottero
Selina Winchester

Alan Baranski
Kate McMahan
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

Monroe Co. Planning
PennDOT District 4-0
PennDOT District 4-0
Urban Engineers
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 4-0
PennDOT District 5-0
Schuylkill Co. Planning
FHWA
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 5-0
Rep. Wild's Office

NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance

*Technical Committee members who voted at this meeting

Summary of Actions Taken by the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee:

During this meeting, the MPO Technical Committee voted on the following actions:

Action 1: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes, as corrected, from the March 15, 2022 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Christy, seconded by Mr. Cotter to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to authorize the release of the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program for public comment. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bodnar called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

1) Business Items

a) Approval of minutes from the March 15, 2022 Business Meeting

Ms. McMahon noted that there was a correction from District 5 on page 3 of the meeting minutes. It incorrectly stated that on Amendment 2 that the remaining phases of the Systemic Safety Improvements would be added to the 2023 TIP. The construction phase of the project will be added this summer. Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes as corrected from the March 15, 2022 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Christy, seconded by Mr. Cotter to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

a) District 4-0 and 5-0 2021-2024 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Information was included in the meeting packet which highlighted administrative actions on the 2021 TIP for District 4-0 and District 5-0. Ms. Koenigkramer highlighted actions for District 5-0. Ms. Pugh highlighted the actions for District 4-0.

Action 1- Schuylkill DF Permanent Repairs- add construction phase to increase for actual expenditures for July 2018 disaster. Previous obligations occurred. Action 2- 33 Median Barrier- advance and revise to new estimate utilizing NHPP funds. 61 Resurfacing Pottsville to Schuylkill Haven- increase to new estimate and advance. The sources are Jim Thorpe Retaining Wall Rehab, PA 33 Median Barrier 115 to 2002 and Marshalls Creek. Action3 – Rattlin Run Rd. Bridge- Ida Permanent Repair- add PE phase for bridge permanent repairs sustained during Tropical Depression Ida. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 4- Columbia Street Arch Bridge- increase to obligated amount for advertisement. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 5- NEPA Bridge Preserve & Repair 6- increase to cover priority 80 repair for BRKEY 27057 being added to ECMS 109334. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 6- NEPA Bridge Preserve & Repair 4- increase for actual construction expenditures and remaining RR invoices. St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction- add money to utility phase for design charges. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 7- SR 2001 over Dingmans Creek- add construction phase per estimate. SR 2003- add construction phase per estimate. The source is the SR 6 over Delaware River construction phase. Action 8- County Bridge #12 over Mud Run- toll credit county owned bridge in anticipation of advertisement. The source is several deobligations in the region and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 9- 715 over McMichael's Creek II- increase for final design supplement for permitting archeology and remaining design tasks. The source is the 611 Retaining Wall Repairs and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

Commissioner Christy asked what is happening to address the issues with the 611 Retaining Wall in Delaware Water Gap that was affected by recent heavy rainfall. Mr. Rebert stated that the TIP project will permanently address the issues with the failing retaining wall. The current issues will likely be addressed by department work forces. A field view of the damage is occurring today. Mr. Rai noted in the meeting chat that District Design, including Geotech Unit, will be meeting this afternoon to discuss the SR 611 wall repair options. Commissioner Christy stated that they need to consider the location of the Liberty Trail and the potential train to NYC in the longer term project.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status

Ms. Pugh provided an update on major/interstate projects in District 4-0. Mr. Vottero provided an update on major/interstate projects in District 5-0.

Mr. Bodnar asked about the I-80 White Haven Bridges. East Side Borough is concerned about the impact on SR 940 as the diversion route. They are concerned that it will affect pipes under the road and drainage. Rep. Heffley also expressed concerns about the impacts that the additional traffic will have on SR 940 and the Borough of White Haven. Mr. Vottero stated that the project does include some improvements on SR 940. He also stated that the project was revised so the toll will only be collected once in each direction for the two I-80 bridges that are part of the P3 initiative.

b) 2023 TIP Development

Mr. Baranski stated that we have an almost complete TIP package for public comment. We have been providing some of the documents as they have become available. We provided the full TIP package by email last week. We are planning to have the 30-day public comment period run from May 2 to May 31, with a public hearing on May 17th. It will be held at the Monroe County Transportation Authority, with remote locations in the other three MPO counties. The public hearing will be followed by the Technical Committee meeting. The STC will hold a 15-day public comment period on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) from June 1-15. There will be a joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting on June 21st. At that meeting, we will take a series of actions to adopt the TIP.

One potential issue is that we are still awaiting the Air Quality Conformity Report from PennDOT Central Office. As a result, it may affect when the TIP goes out for public comment. It may be pushed out one week, with the beginning of the comment period on May 9th instead of May 2nd. The public hearing would still occur on May 17th. Mr. Smoker stated that some air quality conformity information was released to the Interagency Coordination Group (ICG). The ICG is made up of many agencies that review the air quality conformity analysis. Mr. Smoker stated that he already provided comments back and he is hopeful that we will have the report in time for the comment period to begin on May 2nd.

Ms. McMahon stated that as part of the public comment period, the TIP documents will be available on the NEPA website. We are launching a new NEPA Alliance website and there will be a dedicated TIP page with all of the TIP documents. It will also have an ArcGIS online map that was developed by Ms. Ginocchetti. Ms. McMahon provided a demonstration of the online TIP map.

Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to authorize the release of the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program for public comment. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Eastern PA Freight Study

Ms. McMahon stated that an RFP for a consultant for the plan was issued in February and three responses were received. The MPOs did an initial scoring of the proposals and have invited two consultants to be interviewed by the group. The interviews will occur later this month. We expect to have the consultant selected in May and under contract in June. The study will kick off in July and will run for about a year. It will be completed by June 2023.

d) Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant

Ms. McMahon stated that information was included in the meeting memo about three programs that were authorized by the IIJA Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL). The programs are the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (RURAL), the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and the

National Infrastructure Assistance Program (MEGA). The programs are currently accepting applications. The programs were authorized for five years under BIL so funding will be available in future years as well. Ms. McMahon stated that the application process for the three programs is very involved. We learned during the development of the INFRA application for the Rt. 61 Project that it involves a lot of analysis and data, especially the cost-benefit analysis. We will continue to monitor these programs for opportunities in our region. Mr. Smoker stated that the programs are a good opportunity to fund projects and provided details on the programs in the meeting chat.

e) Milford Borough Traffic Study

Ms. McMahon stated that the Milford Borough Traffic Study is nearing completion. A meeting with the consultant, Michael Baker International, and the steering committee was held last month. A draft of the plan has been provided to the steering committee. The borough is currently reviewing the draft and it will also be reviewed by PennDOT District 4. We are planning to have a presentation from Michael Baker at the May 17th meeting to review the draft plan and the recommendations included in the plan.

f) Long Range Transportation Plan

Ms. McMahon stated that we are due for an update of our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Our most recent LRTP was adopted in April 2020. We are required to update the LRTP every four years due to our air quality conformity status so our update is due by April 2024. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker International led the committee in a discussion about the previous LRTP and what we would like to see in the updated LRTP. He also provided an overview of scope of services and the tasks to be completed as part of the LRTP development.

4) Other Business

None.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.