

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

May 16, 2023 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

David Alas*
Megan Beste
Marie Bishop
Casey Bottiger
Chris Chapman
Roger Christman*
John Christy*
Amy Cozze
Kerry Cutright
Micah Gursky
Steve Fisher*
Doyle Heffley*
Kathy Henderson
Peggy Howarth*
AJ Jordan*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Amanda Leindecker
Gary Martinaitis*

Organization:

PennDOT Central
Rep. Wild's Office
PennDOT District 4-0
Michael Baker Intl.
Luzerne Co. Planning
Ross Township
Monroe Co. Commiss.
Sen. Casey's Office
PennDOT District 5-0
St. Luke's Hospital
PennDOT District 4-0
PA House of Reps.
CCEDC
MCTA
LANTA
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
STS

Attendees:

Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*
John Petrini
Gene Porochniak
Emma Pugh
Ted Ritsick
Rich Schlameuss
Jonathan Shaw
Brian Snyder*
Susan Smith*
Scott Vottero
Garry Wentz*

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahon
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

Monroe Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 4-0
FHWA
PennDOT District 4-0
DCED
MCTA
Luzerne Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
Schuylkill Co. Planning
PennDOT District 5-0
NEPA Board

NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
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: Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Howarth to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve Amendment 1- SR 209 Resurfacing. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve Amendment 2- St Clair to Frackville UTL and CON phase increase. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Ms. Meinhart-Fritz. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 4: Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve soliciting projects for the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Program, the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ). A motion was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Christy. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

1) Business Items

a) Approval of minutes from the March 21, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Howarth to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

a) District 4-0 and 5-0 2023-2026 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Information was included in the meeting packet which highlighted administrative actions on the 2023 TIP for District 4-0 and 5-0. Mr. Fisher highlighted the actions for District 4-0. Ms. Koenigkramer highlighted the actions for District 5-0.

Action 1- Milford Enhancement Committee Phase 14- increase construction phase to low bid amount. The source is the Milford- Bushkill #2 deobligation. Action 2- SR 6 over Delaware River- add PE phase for an AC conversion. The sources are Milford-Bushkill #2, SR 6 over Vandermark Creek and SR 390 over Bridge Creek deobligations. Action 3- US 209 over NRR- increase to cover supplement and internal charges. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 4- SR 715 over Pocono Creek- increase to cover supplement and internal charges. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 1- SR 115 Effort Corridor Improvements- cashflow sHSIP funds to FFY 24 due to ROW delays. The source is the HSIP Set Aside Reserve. Statewide Informational Item 2- NEPA High Friction Surface 2023- increase to meet low bid. The source is the HSIP Set Aside Reserve. Action 5- 443 over Mill Creek- swap out STP funds for BRIP to cover estimated need for final design. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 6- St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction- increase for final design supplement. The sources are PA 309 McAdoo and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 3 and 4- add Congestion Reduction Program funds to the TIP in District 4 and District 5. The source is the Carbon Reduction Program Reserve Line Item. Action 7- SR 6 Paving- increase construction phase to process a work order. The source is SR 6 over Delaware River, MEC Phase 14 and the NEPA 4-0 Highway Reserve Line Item. Action 8- SR 590 Pipes- advance CON phase and convert to 100% federal. The source is the NEPA Highway Reserve Line Item. Amendment 1- SR 209 520-560 Resurfacing- add project to TIP to complete paving on State Route 209. This section of SR 209 is a missing piece between other TIP and HOP paving projects. The sources are 209 Holy Cross to Hollow Road, 611 Retaining Wall Repairs, 309 Resurfacing Ben Titus Road North which are being aligned with anticipated need and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 9- Berne Drive over Red Creek Bridge- increase for low bid adjustment. The sources are Sullivan Trail Road over Pocono Creek and Beckville Road over WB Schuylkill River. Action 10- SR 611 Emergency Rock Slope Mitigation- add PE phase to cover negotiated amount plus internal charges. The source is the ROW phase of the project.

Amendment 2- St Clair to Frackville UTL and CON phase increase (MPMS 96470)

- Utility phase increase (~\$4.5 Million):
 - Relocation of the waterline to a parallel abandoned railroad bed owned by Schuylkill County Municipal Authority due to mountainous terrain, limited access points, constrained work zones.
 - Design costs for electric and telecommunication utility work (PPL & Verizon).
- Construction cost increase(~\$19.8 Million):

- Increased costs on 12 total structures after additional details were obtained after drilling; higher unit prices.
- Increases also resulted from traffic control plans incorporating in more detail and pay items.
 - Length of temporary concrete barrier; needs to be removed and reset multiple times.
- Additional noted increases include additional bid items to account for unforeseen repairs to pavement and structures, mobilization, additional retaining wall and bridge, utility work, etc.
- The sources for this increase are:
 - SR715/611 Intersection (MPMS 79473)
 - Slightly reduced to the revised estimate (includes year of expenditure)
 - 61 resurface from Walmart plaza to SR 1004 (MPMS 96565) & 309 betterment from 895 to 443 project (MPMS 96441)
 - Both reduced to revised estimates; to be reevaluated during TIP development
 - NEPA highway and bridge line item (MPMS 102240)

Ms. Smith asked about what CPDM is. Ms. Koenigkramer stated that a write up has to go to Central Office for review for amendments between \$1 million and \$2.5 million. Amendments over \$2.5 million have to go to PMC for approval. Ms. Howarth asked what section of SR 209 is being paved in Amendment 1- Ms. Koenigkramer stated that it is north of Marshall's Creek between Holy Cross Road and Hollow Road. It is in Smithfield and Middle Smithfield Townships.

Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve Amendment 1- SR 209 Resurfacing. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve Amendment 2- St Clair to Frackville UTL and CON phase increase. A motion was made by Mr. Malinchok, seconded by Ms. Meinhart-Fritz. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions
None.

3) **Transportation Planning & Programs**

a) Current Project Status

Mr. Fisher provided an update on Highway projects in District 4-0. Mr. Vottero provided an update on Highway projects in District 5-0.

Mr. Gursky stated that the Coaldale ARC project is short of funding due to cost increases and asked if there is any additional funding for the project. Ms. Leindecker stated that they reached out to Central Office to see what funding options there might be. Ms. McMahon stated that the pedestrian components of the project were removed due to a lack of funding. We do not receive this type of funding as part of our TIP funding allocations but there is competitive funding that can be used for pedestrian projects. We will discuss the TASA program later on the agenda and Multimodal Transportation Fund is another option for funding. She will send information to Mr. Gursky about both programs.

Ms. Henderson asked if the MTF project in Carbon County is the Northface development. Mr. Vottero stated that it is. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked which municipality it is located in. It is in Palmerton Borough.

Ms. Smith stated that there have been some personnel changes at District 5. Mr. Kufro stated that Mike Carroll has been confirmed as the new PennDOT Secretary. Secretary Carroll asked Mike Rebert to serve as the Acting Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration. Mr. Kufro was asked to serve as Acting District Executive in District 5. He has been serving as the DE for District 8. Mr. Vottero has also been made the permanent Assistance DE for Design and Kerri Cutright moved into Mr. Vottero's previous position.

b) NEPA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Ms. Bottiger provided an update on the LRTP. Ms. Bottiger stated that the stakeholder interviews are nearly complete. They have been very helpful in shaping the background profile for the LRTP. The information supplements the publicly available data they already have and validates and expands on it. The interviews also help shape the strategic directions of the plan and the action strategies to implement the plan. MBI is currently doing prep work for other engagements. District strategy days with the PennDOT districts and county planners are coming up. Public outreach through listening sessions in each county will be held later this summer. The STC survey for the TYP Public Comment Period has closed. MBI has received data on responses from the NEPA MPO region. Ms. McMahon stated that the June MPO meeting will be a joint meeting with the Technical Committee and Policy Board and will be followed by an LRTP Steering Committee meeting and we are requesting in person attendance if possible.

c) 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Twelve Year Program

Mr. Baranski stated that the 2025 TIP development process has started. The Financial Guidance and General and Procedure Guidance documents have been finalized. They have been shared with the voting committee members. Before the next meeting, we will develop a TIP development timeline. This time next year, we will be wrapping up the process and adopting the 2025 TIP. Our next step is to review the current TIP projects and determine which projects will carryover. Meetings with the districts will be held in the coming weeks.

d) Congressional Directed Community Project Funding

Ms. McMahon stated that we have been working with the federal legislative offices to submit appropriations requests for Congressional Directed Community Project Funding, previously known as earmarks. Three projects were submitted by the legislators to the Appropriations Committees.

SR 6 over Delaware River Matamoras Bridge- \$5 million (Rep. Cartwright) and \$2 million (Sen. Casey)
Hamilton West (SR 209) Resurfacing- \$5 million (Rep. Cartwright)
903 over Mud Run Bridge- \$3.2 million (Rep. Wild)

Ms. McMahon stated that this is the first step in the process, but it is a good sign since the legislators were only able to submit a limited number of projects to the Appropriations Committees. We should know later this summer whether they get into the draft bill. We should know by the end of the year if they are funded. Any appropriations funding that we receive will free up money on our TIP or can be used for any cost increases.

e) Eastern PA Freight Study

Mr. Baranski stated that a meeting with the project consultant, WSP, was held last week. A lot of freight data has been shared with WSP and has been incorporated into the freight profile for the 10 county area. We just received a copy of the draft profile. It is very data heavy. WSP is still working on the land use and zoning and rail freight movement components. We will share the draft profile with the county planners later today. Comments are due to WSP by early June. We will have an engagement of stakeholders in person to review the profile and provide information on trends in each region to backfill the existing profile. It will be scheduled in late summer. WSP will develop an action plan. The timeline for completion of the plan is going to be delayed. It will likely be by the end of the year.

f) Functional Classification Update

Ms. McMahon stated that PennDOT formally resubmitted the package of functional classification changes to FHWA about 10 days ago. Mr. Porochniak stated that FHWA is reviewing the changes internally. They will reach out if there are any questions. The National Highway System (NHS) changes have to go to USDOT headquarters in DC for approval which will take some time. FHWA will issue an interim approval for the non-NHS changes. Ms. Smith asked how often we need to do a review of the functional classification. Ms. McMahon stated that the reviews typically happen following the decennial census. We got a late start following the 2010 census. We will likely look at it again following the next census. We can submit changes in between if development occurs and requires a change. The review next time will take less effort since we will have the data from this review and we can just look at roadways where major development has occurred or where there are significant changes in ADT. Ms. Smith recommended sharing the functional classification changes with Michael Baker International for the LRTP.

g) Federal and State Funding Opportunities

Mr. Baranski stated that the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) funding round is opening this month. Some larger MPOs get their own TASA allocation but we do not. Projects in our region compete for statewide funds. There is a webinar about the program on May 24th. Other funding allocations such as the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) were provided through the IIJA. We received 2 years of urban CRP funding and we will now only receive rural CRP funding. The project eligibility for CRP is similar to TASA. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds also have similar eligibility but can only be used for projects located in Carbon County. We have discussed with Central Office and FHWA the possibility of soliciting projects for all three programs through the TASA application portal. It's a two-step process. Pre-applications are due in July. A meeting will be held with district and MPO staff to review the projects for eligibility. A final application will be due in September. The MPO committee will review the applications. We will need help in getting the word out to applicant sponsors to get good projects. Ms. McMahon stated that we will be sending out a transportation newsletter with the information and can put together something to share with committee members and potential applicants.

Ms. Smith requested a motion to approve soliciting projects for the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Program, the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ). A motion was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Christy. The motion passed unanimously.

h) 2023-2024 MPO Technical Committee and Policy Board Meeting Dates

Ms. McMahon stated that the draft schedule for Technical Committee dates for next year was included in the meeting packet. Most of the proposed dates are on the third Tuesday of the month. In October, the third Tuesday conflicts with the PPA Conference so we are proposing to move it up by a week to October 10th. We are also anticipating that the May meeting will be the public comment meeting for the TIP and the June meeting will be a joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting for the adoption of the 2025 TIP. The Policy Board meeting dates usually follow the NEPA Alliance Board of Directors meetings. The schedule for next year has not been finalized but once it is, we will send out the draft schedule. Ms. Smith asked if we are approving the dates now. Mr. Baranski stated that we can approve them at the June meeting since we should have the Policy Board meeting schedule by then. He asked the committee members to review the draft Technical Committee schedule and let us know if there are any major conflicts.

i) 2024-2025 UPWP Development Process

Mr. Baranski stated that at the direction of PennDOT, we are beginning the process of developing the next work program. It will be a one-year work program for 2024 to 2025. Currently, the development of

the two-year work program occurs at the same time as the development of the TIP. They would like to get it onto an alternating schedule, so this UPWP development exercise will be for a one-year program and will return to a two-year work program the following year. A UPWP committee will be engaged to assist in the development of the UPWP as we usually do. We expect to convene the committee starting later this summer and adoption will occur by the end of next January. We will share guidance from Central Office when we receive it.

j) PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach

Mr. Baranski stated that the PennDOT Connects municipal outreach session in District 5 will occur later today at the district office and virtually. Mr. Fisher stated that the session in District 4 was held at the end of March. It was a hybrid session with about 40 participants in the room and 20 more online. It covered grant funding opportunities and offered information about assistance in drafting grant applications. The STC outreach process was covered as well as the NEVI program. DCED and DCNR also provided information about funding opportunities through those departments.

4) Other Business

Mr. Baranski stated that we will consider an amendment to our current UPWP to add some funding from the IIIA for the Safe and Accessible Transportation Options program. It is about \$37,000 over two years and will be added as a separate task in the UPWP. We will likely use it to develop an active transportation plan for the MPO region.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.