

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

August 15, 2023 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

David Alas*
Marie Bishop
David Bodnar*
Casey Bottiger
Chris Chapman
Roger Christman*
John Christy*
Brendan Cotter*
Amy Cozze
Nyomi Evans
Brian Funkhouser
Doyle Heffley*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Chris Kufro
Gary Martinaitis*
Mike Mrozinski*

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4-0
Carbon Co. Planning
Michael Baker Intl.
Luzerne Co. Planning
Ross Township
Monroe Co. Commiss.
LANTA
Sen. Casey's Office
PennDOT Central
Michael Baker Intl.
PA State Representative
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
STS
Pike Co. Planning

Attendees:

John Petrini*
Gene Porochniak
Emma Pugh
Rich Schlameuss*
Jonathan Shaw
Brian Snyder*
Susan Smith*
Scott Vottero
Garry Wentz*

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahon
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

PennDOT District 4-0
FHWA
PennDOT District 4-0
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 June 20, 2023 Joint Policy Board and Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the July 20, 2023 email ballot approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project Amendment and Hamilton West Resurfacing Project Amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Mr. Schlameuss. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the August 7, 2023 email ballot approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project Amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Mr. Cotter. 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 June 20, 2023 Joint Policy Board and Technical Committee Business Meeting

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2023 Joint Policy Board and Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

- b) Confirmation of July 20, 2023 Email Ballot Approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project Amendment and Hamilton West Resurfacing Project Amendment

Ms. McMahon stated that the email ballot was approved by a vote of 12 yay and 0 nay. Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the July 20, 2023 email ballot approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project Amendment and Hamilton West Resurfacing Project Amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Mr. Schlameuss. The motion passed unanimously.

- c) Confirmation of August 7, 2023 Email Ballot Approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Amendment

Ms. McMahon stated that the email ballot was approved by a vote of 9 yay and 0 nay. Mr. Christy asked to confirm that we did not receive any Congressional funding for the 209/33 over Appenzell Creek Bridge. Ms. McMahon stated that Congresswoman Wild included funding in the legislation that became the IJA but ultimately there were no Congressional projects included in the final bill so we did not receive funding for the project.

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the August 7, 2023 email ballot approving SR 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project Amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Mr. Cotter. 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. Petrini highlighted the actions for District 4-0. Ms. Koenigkramer highlighted the actions for District 5-0.

Action 1- NEPA PM#7- increase to cover preliminary engineering supplement. The source is the NEPA Bridge Overlay Bundle #2. Action 2- Pike SR 1013 Paving- increase construction phase to process a work order. The sources are the SR 6 over Delaware River and the NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 1- I-380 Bridge Improvements- increase for final negotiated supplement costs plus internal charges. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 1- Tobyhanna Pocono Summit West- add construction phase for approved Multimodal Project. The source is the Multimodal Reserve Line Item. Action 3- King St. (SR 2015) over Sambo Creek- add UTL phase to cover utility estimate. Delivery Consultant Assistance- increase for supplement. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 2- I-81 Pine Grove to Minersville Resurfacing- reduce to obligate amount and return funds to the Interstate Contingency Line Item to maintain fiscal constraint.

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.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked who the contractor will be on the Schafer Schoolhouse Road project. Mr. Vottero responded in the meeting chat that it will be James D. Morrissey, Inc.

b) NEPA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Funkhouser provided an update on the Long Range Transportation Plan development. Mr. Funkhouser stated that they have gathered a lot of data through existing sources and stakeholder interviews. The background profile and revenue forecast have been drafted. The next steering committee meeting will be held following the September 19th MPO Tech Committee meeting. Mr. Baranski stated that we are requesting in-person attendance for that meeting if possible. Mr. Funkhouser stated that MBI will provide the draft of the profile for review before the meeting. A round of listening sessions for the LRTP is underway with two scheduled this week in Pike and Monroe counties. The listening sessions will supplement the data from the STC survey earlier this year. The survey identified some candidate projects. Following the listening sessions, we will begin the project prioritization process which we did not go through during the last update. We have the criteria from the first LRTP development. We will also have an engagement with the ACM which includes representatives from the environmental resource agencies in the state. On September 27th, we will present results from the proposed program and how they interact with environmental features to the Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM). Mr. Funkhouser stated that we expect the plan development to wrap up in November to allow for the 30-day comment period and consideration of any comments by the Technical Committee at the December meeting.

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

Mr. Baranski stated that staff has developed a schedule for the 2025 TIP development process and shared it with the committees. Our next step is to review the current TIP projects and determine which projects will carryover. August redistribution is coming up and it may be significant and could help fund projects in our region. It could help clear out projects on the current TIP, but there is no guarantee about where the funding will go. We are hoping to see some further funds toward the SR 61 Reconstruction project. Meetings with the districts will be held in the coming weeks and will include the county planners. Mr. Baranski stated that we would like the meetings to be held in-person at the district offices. Mr. Kufro stated that is what they are planning to do in District 5. Mr. Mrozinski requested to receive the project spreadsheet before the TIP meeting so he has the opportunity to review it ahead of time. Ms. Smith asked about the financial guidance document. Ms. McMahon stated that she can send it out.

d) Eastern PA Freight Study

Mr. Baranski stated that WSP has developed a freight survey for the public to fill out. A link was provided in the meeting memo. The survey will go out in all five MPO regions participating in the study. We are also scheduling an in-person meeting with freight stakeholders in the freight and economic development sectors. We will have two regional meetings. One will cover Pike and Monroe and the other will cover Carbon and Schuylkill. The tentative date is September 26th. Mr. Mrozinski asked if the meetings will be open to the public. Mr. Baranski stated that they will not and will be limited to stakeholders to facilitate a free flowing discussion. Mr. Christy asked who will be invited from Monroe. Mr. Baranski stated that we are developing the list and will share it.

e) Functional Classification Update

Mr. Porochniak stated that FHWA received additional information from PennDOT Central Office. There should be further updates in the coming weeks.

f) TASA, CRP and CMAQ Funding Opportunity

Ms. McMahon stated that the TASA pre-applications were due in July and four were submitted in our region. There are three in Schuylkill and one in Pike. No applications were submitted for projects located in Monroe or Carbon. We had planned to screen the TASA applications for eligibility under the

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program. Since CMAQ is only eligible in Carbon County, we will have to look for existing projects to use those funds.

The PennDOT district and MPO staff are meeting with each project sponsor to review the pre-application. One meeting has been held already and the other three are scheduled. The final application will be due by September 15th. Once the final applications are received, we will screen the projects for eligibility under CRP and fund the projects locally, if we can. The rest will go into the statewide TASA round for consideration.

Mr. Baranski stated that announcements for the Green Light Go program were recently announced and Tremont Township received an award.

g) 2024-2025 UPWP Development Process

Mr. Baranski stated that there is a UPWP Subcommittee meeting following the conclusion of the MPO meeting to review the current UPWP tasks and begin discussing the 2024-2025 UPWP.

h) Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program.

Ms. McMahon stated that the Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program was created as part of the IIJA. The program is to provide funding for projects that need assistance in getting ready to apply for one of the large discretionary programs such as RAISE. Earlier this week, NEPA submitted an application for the SR 2001 Reconstruction Project in Pike County. This has been Pike County's number one project for the past 30 years. It is currently programmed for preliminary engineering on the TYP but we haven't been able to get it going. We applied for \$320,000 in funding for a consultant to assist in determining the project scope and cost, do some early right-of-way and environmental work and assist in developing an application for funding, including a cost-benefit analysis. The program is not a competitive program, rather it is on a first-come, first-served basis. The application opened on Monday at 2pm and the application was submitted by 2:04. Hopefully it will be one of the first applications in and will get funded. We should hear later this year if it is awarded. Ms. Smith asked if this is the project near where we held the meeting last fall. Ms. McMahon stated that it is that project, which is located in Delaware Township.

4) Other Business

Mr. Baranski stated that we will consider an amendment to our current UPWP at the September meeting. It is to add some additional IIJA funds to the work program that will be used for a bike/ped plan development.

Ms. McMahon stated that the NEVI awards for electric vehicle charging stations were announced yesterday. There were three awards in our region. One is in Pike County off Interstate 84, exit 34. One is in Schuylkill County off Interstate 81 exit 119 and the last is in Monroe County off Interstate 80 exit 284 in Blakeslee.

Mr. Kufro stated that there was an article recently regarding the 611 closure in Delaware Water Gap. The article indicated that National Park Service believes that PennDOT has not been responsive to the situation. District 5 is developing a detailed timeline of events that they will provide to show the steps they have been taking to remedy the situation. Mr. Kufro also stated that Vanessa Koenigkramer will be leaving District 5 to pursue other opportunities. He thanked her for her work over the years and wished her well in her new career. Vanessa's departure follows Amanda Leindecker's recent retirement so there will be some new faces from District 5 in the NEPA region.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.