

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

February 20, 2024 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

David Alas*
Chris Barrett
Marie Bishop
David Bodnar*
Chris Chapman
Roger Christman*
Kerri Cutright
Carol Etheridge
Nyomi Evans
Steve Fisher*
Brian Funkhouser
Micah Gursky
Rachael Hobbs
AJ Jordan*
Gary Martinaitis*
Mike Mrozinski*

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PMVB
PennDOT District 4-0
Carbon Co. Planning
DCED
Ross Township
PennDOT District 5
Rep. Wild's Office
PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4-0
Michael Baker Intl.
St. Luke's Hospital
DCED
LANTA
STS
Pike Co. Planning

Attendees:

Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
John Petrini
Emma Pugh
Jeff Rai
Jennifer Ruth
Rich Schlameuss*
Jonathan Shaw
Brian Snyder*
Susan Smith*
Scott Vottero*
Garry Wentz*

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Kate McMahon

Organization:

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

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 December 19, 2023 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Mr. Alas to approve the minutes. 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 December 19, 2023 Technical Committee Business Meeting

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2023 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Mr. Alas 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 5-0. Mr. Alas highlighted the actions for District 5. There were no actions for District 4.

District 5-0

Interstate Action 1- I-80 Reconstruction- increase to match current estimate. The source is the I-78 Recon and the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Action 1- Mount Pocono Borough Pipe- Ida Perm Repair- add construction phase to the TIP. The source is Raven Run Road over Shenandoah Creek and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Interstate Action 2- I-80 Sec 17M Breakout #1- add utility phase for project breakout. The source is the I-80 Reconstruction Project. Interstate Action 3- I-80 Reconstruction Project- release funds due to programming on 2025 TIP. Action 2- NEPA PM #6- funds for additional work due to deterioration of King Street over Sambo Creek. The source is NEPA PM #7 and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 3- SR 1021 Lincoln Drive over RBM&N Railroad- increase to cover 971 Claim Damage estimate. The source is the PE and Con phase of Red Rock Road over Frost Hill Run. Action 4- Hamilton West Resurfacing Sciota- increase to cover current estimate. The source is SR 715/611 Intersection and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status

Mr. Fisher provided an update on the bridge projects in District 4-0. Mr. Vottero provided an update on the bridge projects in District 5-0. Mr. Fisher stated that the SR 6 project over the Delaware River may be split into two projects due to environmental restrictions in the river during certain times of the year. Ms. McMahon stated that we requested Congressional funding for this project and we are waiting to hear if it got funded. Mr. Mrozinski stated that the SR 209 over Sawkill Creek information needs to be shared with Milford Borough because the project will have significant impact on the borough. Mr. Fisher will look into it. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked what the local road name is for the SR 2002 Hunters Creek bridge? Mr. Vottero stated he would have to check on it and then put into the meeting chat that it is Little Gap Road. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked what “children” means when discussing projects. Mr. Vottero stated that in a project bundle, one project is designated as the “parent” project and the others are called “children.” This allows flexibility in the event that if one of the projects hits a delay, it can be swapped with another project more easily.

b) NEPA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Baranski stated that the Policy Board met on January 3rd and following the recommendation of the Technical Committee, approved the Long Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Conformity report and resolution. The LRTP and AQ documentation were submitted to Central Office on January 25th. Central Office formally submitted the LRTP and AQ documentation to FHWA and FTA on January 31st. They are currently under review and we hope to have the approval by the March meeting. The date of the AQ conformity acceptance will determine the date when the next LRTP is due in 4 years.

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

Mr. Baranski stated that the TIP development process is on schedule and we are working on the final components. A TIP review meeting with Central Office was held in January. The draft Interstate TIP and Transit TIPs are forthcoming. Some additional funding through HSIP was received. Staff is currently preparing the supporting TIP documentation. The Air Quality Conformity Report is usually the last piece to be received. Since we just completed an AQ report for the LRTP, it should not be an issue. Mr. Baranski reviewed the TIP adoption timeline that was included in the meeting packet.

April 16, 2024- Technical Committee Authorizes 30-day TIP Comment Period

May 6, 2024- TIP Public Comment Period Opens

May 21, 2024- TIP Public Meeting (prior to Technical Committee meeting)

June 14, 2024- TIP Public Comment Period Ends

June 18, 2024- Joint MPO Tech Committee/Policy Board Meeting to Consider TIP Adoption

We will share additional information as it becomes available.

d) Public Participation Plan, Title VI Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan

Mr. Baranski stated that a scope of services for the update of the PPP, Title VI Plan and LEP was approved in the fall. Michael Baker International is assisting in the update of the plans. Mr. Funkhouser provided a presentation on the plan updates. Mr. Baranski stated that it has been a while since the plans were developed. Our processes have adapted to accepted procedures, but the written plans need to reflect the current practices and meet current compliance requirements, especially Title VI. Updating the Title VI Plan can help the transit providers since they fall under it. We anticipate having the required 45-day public comment period starting on March 1. Mr. Baranski went through the timeline for the plan updates that were provided in the meeting packet.

March 1, 2024- 45-day Public Comment Period Opens

March 19, 2024- Public Comment Meeting (prior to Technical Committee meeting)

April 15, 2024- 45-day Public Comment Period Closes

April 16, 2024- Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board Meeting to Consider Adoption

The March 19th meeting will be held in-person in each county and will also be virtual, similar to other public meetings. It will be followed by a Technical Committee meeting. The locations of the public meeting are being confirmed.

e) Functional Classification Update

Ms. McMahon stated we are still waiting for approval of the National Highway System changes for Rt. 6 in Pike and Wayne counties by FHWA headquarters in DC. We hope to have it by the next meeting.

f) Active Transportation Plan

Mr. Baranski stated that the Technical Committee took action in the fall to add ISATO funding to the work program and approve a draft scope of services for the Active Transportation Plan. We have been working with Michael Baker International to make some final edits to the scope. We plan to engage a steering committee of interested parties to assist in the development of the plan and will hold a kickoff meeting likely in March. We will be reaching out to the county planners for suggestions of individuals to serve on the steering committee. We will share more information between now and the March Technical Committee meeting including a timeline. We expect the plan development to go through the end of the calendar year. Mr. Funkhouser stated that the Active Transportation Plan is a follow up to the LRTP. It was identified as an action item in the LRTP and some project needs identified in the LRTP can be addressed by the Active Transportation Plan.

g) Eastern PA Freight Study

Mr. Baranski stated that we are in the final phase of the plan development. A survey was conducted with over 4,200 responses. Freight trends for each region have been completed. The state recently released a Truck Parking Study which WSP is reviewing as an additional resource in the regional freight plan. There will be an analysis for each region and strategies to address freight issues. Model ordinances will be included. The plan will be completed by June 2024, at the latest. We expect a presentation from WSP before adoption.

h) Funding Opportunities

Mr. Baranski stated that IJA funding opportunities continue to roll out.

PROTECT- Mr. Baranski stated that PROTECT funding is targeted to address resiliency issues. The Financial Guidance Work Group looked at how to distribute PROTECT funds to the MPOs and RPOs for the 2025 TIP update, but decided to keep it centralized for now to ensure projects meet program criteria

and fund obligation deadlines. The Financial Guidance Workgroup will look at allocation distributions again for the 2027 TIP. Central Office recently issued a memo to the MPOs and RPOs and districts to solicit projects that meet criteria such as flooding, rockslides, road closures, etc. We shared the information with the county planners and contacted the districts to look at eligible projects. Significant funding is available over two years. The deadline to submit projects is March 29th. We received information from District 4 but no projects in Pike County were listed. We will continue to work with the districts to identify projects.

Mr. Vottero stated that District 5 will set up a meeting in a few weeks to look at projects. Mr. Vottero iterated that Rt. 61 Reconstruction Project received about \$21 million in PROTECT funds and is looking to identify 1-2 other projects in each county to submit for funding. Mr. Fisher stated that District 4 keeps a running list of slide projects and is using that as a starting point to identify projects.

Mr. Mrozinski asked what information has been sent to the county planners. Ms. McMahon stated the email from Central Office included a link to mapping layers that show locations of road closures, rockslides, flooding etc. Mr. Baranski stated that the email from Central Office also included a form to be filled out by the districts for each project submitted. Ms. Smith asked if the data is available to the counties. It would be helpful when developing the county hazard mitigation plan. Ms. Smith also asked if the potential projects/vulnerabilities should be addressed by the LRTP. Ms. McMahon stated that we should definitely look at it during the TIP development since they need to be addressed sooner than the span of the LRTP. Mr. Fisher stated that some of the projects can be addressed as maintenance projects. Ms. Cutright said that District 5 will set up a meeting. Mr. Mrozinski suggested that the county maintenance managers be included in the meeting. Mr. Fisher stated that the maintenance managers are helping to identify potential projects. Ms. Smith asked how road closure information gets entered into 511PA. Mr. Fisher said that it is coordinated between the State Police and District Traffic Operations Centers. Ms. Smith asked to learn more about that at a future meeting.

Bridge Investment Program (BIP)- Mr. Baranski said that another funding round is available. Competitive applications are being received for FY 24/25. They are being coordinated by Central Office. A bundle of PA/NY bridges was submitted for funding last year but it was not awarded.

ATTAIN- Mr. Baranski stated that Central Office submitted an application for ATTAIN funding for permanent variable speed signs along Interstate 81 in Schuylkill County. There are currently temporary signs. NEPA provided a letter of support for the application.

i) PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach

Mr. Baranski stated that more PennDOT Connects municipal outreach sessions will be held this spring. Sessions have been set in District 4 on May 7th and on May 16th in District 5. They will be hybrid meetings held at the district offices and virtually. NEPA staff will attend both sessions in person. Information was included in the packet about registration for the sessions.

4) Other Business

None.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.