

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

March 19, 2024 Technical Planning Committee Meeting Summary and Minutes

Attendees:

David Alas*
Aleshia Amadi
Marie Bishop
David Bodnar*
Casey Bottiger
Bob Carl
Roger Christman*
Kerri Cutright
Nyomi Evans
Steve Fisher*
Brian Funkhouser
Micah Gursky
Kathy Henderson
Gary Hess
AJ Jordan*
Rob Manzella
Gary Martinaitis*
Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4-0
Carbon Co. Planning
Michael Baker Intl.
Schuylkill Chamber
Ross Township
PennDOT District 5
PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4-0
Michael Baker Intl.
St. Luke’s Hospital
CCEDC
Schuylkill Co. Commiss
LANTA
Luzerne Co. Planning
STS
Monroe Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning

Attendees:

Wayne Nothstein
Matt Osterberg*
Larry Peterson
John Petrini
Jennifer Ruth
Rich Schlameuss*
Ronald Schmalzle
Jonathan Shaw
Brian Snyder
Susan Smith*
Mike Sofranko
Scott Vottero*

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahon
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

Carbon Co. Commiss.
Pike Co. Commiss.
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 4-0
PennDOT District 5-0
MCTA
Pike Co. Commiss.
Luzerne Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
Schuylkill Co. Planning
Carbon Co. Commiss.
PennDOT District 5-0

NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance

*Technical Committee members who voted at this meeting

Note:

The March 19th NEPA MPO Technical Committee was conducted as a hybrid meeting with staff attendance at four physical locations in the NEPA MPO region, linked via a Teams meeting internet connection. Virtual participation via the internet TEAMS link was also offered as a means of attendance for the public and committee members not at the NEPA staffed meeting locations.

Meeting Locations:

Carbon County Emergency Management Agency, 1264 Emergency Lane, Nesquehoning, PA
Monroe County Planning Commission, 701 Main St., 4th Floor, Stroudsburg, PA
Pike County Administration Building, 506 Broad St., Milford, PA
Schuylkill Economic Development Corporation, Union Station, 2nd Floor, 1 Progress Circle, Pottsville, PA

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 February 20, 2024 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Meinhart-Fritz to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

1) Business Items

a) Approval of Minutes from the February 20, 2024 Technical Committee Business Meeting

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024 Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Alas, seconded by Ms. Meinhart-Fritz 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 District 5-0. Mr. Fisher highlighted the actions for District 4. Mr. Alas highlighted the actions for District 5.

District 4

Action 1- SR 447 over Wallenpaupack Creek- add construction phase for potential bid. The sources are the NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item, Asset Management Phase 1 and Asset Management Phase 3. Action 2- SR 309 over Outlet Promised Land Lake- add ROW phase per claim estimate. The source is the final design phase of the project.

District 5

Action 1- PA 715 Stone Arch Bridge Replacement- increase final design phase to cover negotiated agreement amount plus internal costs and flip funding to federal. The source is 209 Business over Kettle Creek project and Kunkletown Road over Princess Run. Action 2- Weatherly Retaining Wall Replacement- add PE phase to the TIP to allow the project to move forward with PROTECT. The sources are SR 715/611 Intersection and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status Update – Highway Projects

Mr. Fisher provided an update on the highway projects in District 4. Mr. Vottero provided an update on the highway projects in District 5. Commissioner Nothstein asked about the status of the Stewart Creek Bridge in Mahoning Township which is currently closed. Mr. Vottero stated that there is a meeting scheduled for March 20th. The issue with the bridge is scouring and a long-term project is scheduled for 2032. The district is looking at a fix through maintenance forces to get the bridge reopened by summer.

b) 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. The draft Interstate Tip was included in the meeting packet. The development of the transit TIP and Air Quality Conformity Analysis is ongoing. The 30-day public comment period will open in early May with a TIP Public Comment Meeting to be conducted prior to the May 21st Technical

Committee meeting. Adoption is expected at the joint Technical Committee/Policy Board business meeting on June 18th. We will share additional information as it becomes available.

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

Mr. Baranski stated a public meeting on the Public Participation Plan, Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan was held prior to the Technical Committee meeting. The public comment period runs through April 15th. The Technical Committee and Policy Board will consider adoption of the plans at the joint meeting on April 16th.

d) Functional Classification Update

Ms. McMahon stated we received approval from FHWA headquarters to add Route 6 in Pike and Wayne counties to the National Highway System. That was the last approval needed to wrap up our functional classification review so we will remove it as an agenda item. Any reviews going forward will not be as comprehensive and time-consuming. We will monitor for major changes in ADT or traffic generating impacts from new developments to determine if changes are needed going forward.

e) Active Transportation Plan

Mr. Baranski stated that the final scope of services for the Active Transportation Plan was shared in the meeting packet. Michael Baker International is the consultant on the plan. We plan to engage a steering committee of interested parties to assist in the development of the plan and will hold a kickoff meeting soon. The county planners will be actively involved in the plan and will help identify individuals to serve on the steering committee. Mr. Funkhouser provided a presentation on the plan and the timeline for completion. Ms. Smith stated that Schuylkill County is doing a Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan update and will kick it off in the next month. There will be some overlap, so we need to be clear which plan is involved. Commissioner Hess stated that there is a youth summit coming up in Schuylkill County and it may be a good opportunity to engage with students as part of the study. It will be on April 22nd at the Penn State Schuylkill campus. Mr. Funkhouser stated that they will take a look at it. Mr. Baranski stated that the plan will be a starting point for project improvements. There are many funding programs for bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects and the plan will identify locales and appropriate funding sources. Ms. Smith stated that the 9-11 Trail is doing a feasibility study to look at connecting the 9-11 trail to the D&L trail.

f) Eastern PA Freight Study

Mr. Baranski stated that we are in the final phase of the plan development. We expect to have a draft of the plan by the end of March. The plan will be completed by June 2024, at the latest. We expect a presentation on the plan findings from WSP at an upcoming MPO meeting.

g) Congressionally Directed Community Project Funding

Ms. McMahon stated that the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations bills recently became law. The bill included funding for earmark transportation projects that were submitted by NEPA on behalf of PennDOT. They are:

SR 6 over Delaware River Bridge (Pike County)- \$980,000 (Casey, Cartwright)
SR 209 Hamilton West Resurfacing (Monroe County)- \$980,000 (Cartwright)
SR 903 over Mud Run Bridge Replacement (Carbon County)- \$1 million (Wild)

Staff is currently working with PennDOT to identify potential projects for Fiscal Year 2025 requests. Applications are due on the Senate side by the end of March. Guidance on the House side is forthcoming. Mr. Baranski stated that the projects must be included on the TIP and be obligated within two years. We also need to generate letters of support for the projects.

h) PROTECT Funding

Mr. Baranski stated that we discussed PROTECT funding at the last meeting. PROTECT funding is IJA funding that is targeted to address resiliency issues. 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 are making progress in identifying projects in each of our counties. The deadline to submit projects is March 29th. Ms. Cutright stated that they are working on completing the submission sheets for projects in District 5.

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 10:45 a.m.