

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

January 3, 2024 Policy Board Meeting Summary and Minutes

2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: NEPA Alliance Office and Microsoft Teams Videoconference

<u>Attendees:</u>	<u>Organization:</u>	<u>Attendees:</u>	<u>Organization:</u>
Chris Barrett*	Pocono Mtns. Visitors Bureau	Jennifer Ruth	PennDOT District 5
Nyomi Evans	PennDOT Central Office	Mark Tobin*	PennDOT Central Office
Micah Gursky*	St. Luke's Hospital		
Chris Kufro	PennDOT District 5	<u>NEPA Staff:</u>	
Kathy Henderson*	CCEDC	Alan Baranski	NEPA Alliance
Matt Osterberg*	Pike Co. Commissioner	Jeff Box	NEPA Alliance
Wayne Nothstein	Carbon Co. Commissioner	Kate McMahon	NEPA Alliance
Gene Porochniak	FHWA		

*Committee members who voted at this meeting.

Summary of Actions Taken by the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee

During the course of this meeting the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee voted on the following actions:

Action 1: Ms. Henderson requested a motion to approve the June 20, 2023 NEPA MPO Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Barrett. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Henderson requested a motion to confirm the email ballot approving the NEPA MPO 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and submit it to PennDOT. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 LRTP Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 4: Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 LRTP Air Quality Conformity Analysis Resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Gursky. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 5: Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Henderson called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1) Business Items

a) Approval of Minutes from the NEPA MPO Policy Board June 20, 2023 Meeting

Ms. Henderson requested a motion to approve the June 20, 2023 NEPA MPO Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Barrett. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Confirmation of the Email Ballot Approving the 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Baranski stated that the UPWP has been under development since the summer. The UPWP was developed with the Technical Committee and the Policy Board is kept informed and participates whenever possible. FHWA, FTA and Central Office reviewed the draft UPWP and provided comments. The comments were incorporated into the final draft of the UPWP. The Technical Committee recommended approval of the 2024-2025 UPWP to the Policy Board at its December 19th meeting. An email ballot was approved by the Policy Board to adopt the 2024-2025 UPWP and forward it to the NEPA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors approved the UPWP and accompanying resolution at their meeting today.

Ms. Henderson requested a motion to confirm the email ballot approving the NEPA MPO 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and submit it to PennDOT. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gursky stated that the county employees do a lot of work on the MPO plans and the counties should be proud of their employees. The employees should be recognized for their efforts.

2) **Transportation Planning and Programs**

a) NEPA MPO 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Baranski stated that the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is updated every four years. Michael Baker International has been engaged to assist in the LRTP development. The LRTP development has been conducted over the past year and the plan has gone through several drafts. We held a public comment period for the required 30 days, which included a public meeting. We received verbal comments at the public meeting as well as written comments. The Technical Committee reviewed the LRTP and recommended it to the Policy Board for adoption on December 19th. The adoption includes several steps including the approval of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. A presentation on the LRTP was provided by Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker International (see attached).

Mr. Baranski stated that the LRTP is fiscally constrained. We appreciate the efforts of Central Office to provide additional discretionary funding for some major projects in our region. The additional funding relieves some of the pressure on our regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), allowing other projects to advance. Mr. Nothstein asked if the plan addresses electric vehicles (EV) and charging stations. Carbon County is looking at installing EV charging stations in the county-owned parking lot. Mr. Baranski stated that there are competitive federal funds for EV charging infrastructure. A first round of funding has been awarded and a second round recently opened but that funding is focused on charging stations near the interstates. Ms. McMahon stated that the LRTP does include a section on electric vehicles but it does not identify priority locations for EV charging infrastructure. There are state funds available in addition to the federal funds.

Mr. Baranski stated that there is a series of actions to adopt the Long Range Transportation Plan. Carbon County is a non-attainment county for air quality and Monroe County is in attainment for air quality. An analysis of the projects included in the LRTP was developed to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on air quality in those counties. The resolution confirms the Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 LRTP Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report. A motion was made by Mr. Gursky, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 LRTP Air Quality Conformity Analysis Resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Gursky. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Henderson requested a motion to adopt the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Tobin. The motion passed unanimously.

b) 2025-2028 TIP Development

Mr. Baranski stated that the 2025-2028 TIP development is ongoing. Financial guidance on the availability of funding was received last year. We have held several meetings with the PennDOT districts and county planners to review the current TIP projects to see what will be carried over and if any new projects will be added to the TIP. A fiscally-constrained draft Bridge and Highway TIP was submitted to Central Office by the end of December. We have a review session with Central Office scheduled for later this month. We will also consider transit TIPs for

MCTA, LANTA and STS. Additional projects such as Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) road projects are also carried on the TIP. The Interstate TIP is still forthcoming. An Air Quality Conformity Analysis report for the TIP will also be developed. A public comment period will likely be held in May and consideration of adoption of the 2025-2028 TIP will occur at a joint Technical Committee and Policy Board meeting in June.

c) Eastern PA Freight Plan Development

Mr. Baranski stated that the Eastern PA Freight Plan development is ongoing. Stakeholder outreach sessions have been held in all of the MPO regions. We held two in our region last fall. The sessions help identify needs in each region that will be incorporated into the plan. We expect a draft plan in the spring. It will include an action plan for our region. Mr. Gursky stated that there has been a lot of opposition to warehouses and distribution centers. Mr. Baranski stated that the freight plan will include guidance on model provisions in subdivision and land development ordinances that can assist municipalities in better planning for freight generators.

3) Other Business

Mr. Porochniak included links in the meeting chat for several federal funding opportunities.

https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-11/RAISE%202024%20NOFO%2011.30.23_0.pdf

<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/350731>

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard>

<https://billlaunchpad.com/nofo>

4) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Policy Board Committee meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.