

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

July 16, 2024, Technical Planning Committee Summary and Minutes 9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Rocky Ahner*
David Alas*
Megan Beste
Marie Bishop
Casey Bottiger
Roger Christman*
Kerri Cutright
Nyomi Evans
Micah Gursky*
Doyle Heffley*
Anna Inglis
AJ Jordan*
Chris Kufro*
Robert Manzella
Gary Martinaitis*
Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mark Minnig
Mike Mrozinski*

Organization:

Carbon Co. Commiss.
PennDOT Central
Rep. Wild's Office
PennDOT District 4
Michael Baker Intl.
Ross Twp. Planning
PennDOT District 5
PennDOT Central
St. Luke's Hospital
PA House of Rep.
Sen. Casey's Office
LANTA
PennDOT District 5
Luzerne Co. Planning
STS
Monroe Co. Planning
SEDCO
Pike Co. Planning

Attendees:

Larry Peterson
John Petrini*
Gene Porochniak
Emma Pugh
Jeff Rai
Jennifer Ruth
Brenda Sacco
Jason Skrimcovsky
Susan Smith*
Brian Snyder*
Mariska van Aalst
Scott Vottero

Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahon
Jonathan Shaw
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

PennDOT District 5
PennDOT District 4
FHWA
PennDOT District 4
PennDOT District 5
PennDOT District 5
CCEDC
Carbon Co. Planning
Schuylkill Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
Sen. Casey's Office
PennDOT District 5

NEPA Alliance
NEPA Alliance
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NEPA Alliance

*Technical Committee members who voted at this meeting

Summary of Actions Taken by the NEPA MPO Policy Board and Technical Planning Committee:

During this meeting, the MPO Technical Committee and Policy Board voted on the following actions:

Action 1: Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to nominate a new Technical Committee Chairperson. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz nominated Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Mr. Kufro. The motion to elect Mr. Mrozinski as chairperson passed unanimously.

Action 2: Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to nominate a new Technical Committee Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Smith nominated Ms. Meinhart-Fritz, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion to elect Ms. Meinhart-Fritz as Vice-Chairperson passed unanimously.

Action 3: Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2024, Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board Business Meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Alas, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 4: Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the amended 2024-2025 UPWP and SR 2001 Study Scope of Work. A motion was made by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Mr. Kufro, to approve the UPWP amendment and scope of work. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1) Business Items

a) Nomination/Election of Technical Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Ms. Smith requested a motion from the Technical Committee to nominate a new Technical Committee Chairperson for a two-year term. Ms. McMahon stated that the chair rotates by county every two years and this term it goes to Pike County. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz nominated Mr. Mrozinski, seconded by Mr. Kufro. The motion to elect Mr. Mrozinski as chairperson passed unanimously.

Mr. Mrozinski began chairing the meeting.

Ms. McMahon stated that the vice-chair rotates to Monroe County for this term. Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to nominate a new Technical Committee Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Smith nominated Ms. Meinhart-Fritz, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion to elect Ms. Meinhart-Fritz as Vice-Chairperson passed unanimously.

b) Approval of Minutes from the June 18, 2024 Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board Business Meeting

Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2024 Joint Technical Committee and Policy Board Business Meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Alas, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously

2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

a) District 5 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. Mr. Peterson highlighted the actions for District 5. There were no actions for District 4.

Action 1- Weatherly Retaining Wall- increase for boring and hazardous waste tasks. The source is King St (SR 2015) over Sambo Creek.

Action 2- SR 715/611 Intersection- Increase to cover PS&E estimate. The sources are PA 611 Retaining Wall Rehab and the NEPA Highway & Bridge Line Item.

Action 3- SR 715 over Pocono Creek- Increase to cover PS&E estimate. The sources are PA 611 Retaining Wall Rehab and the NEPA Highway & Bridge Line Item.

Action 4- Hamilton West Resurfacing- Cash flow to align with anticipated need. The source is Jim Thorpe Wall Rehabilitation.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status Update – Highway

Mr. Vottero provided an update on highway projects in District 5. There are no current highway projects in District 4.

b) SR 2001 Section 405 Alternatives Study

Ms. McMahon stated that PennDOT Central Office has approved the supplemental planning funds request for \$350,000 for a study of alternatives for reconstructing SR 2001 in Pike County. SR 2001 has been Pike County's number one project for 30 years, and it has been a challenge to find funding because of the high project cost. A study is necessary to help District 4 identify alternatives and review

environmental issues with nearby National Park Service land. NEPA is not required to provide a local match for the supplemental planning funds. Michael Baker International will complete the study. They have done other work in Pike County including their comprehensive plan and reconstruction of earlier sections of SR 2001. Michael Baker International has developed a scope of work for the study and Pike County has reviewed the scope. Michael Baker International can complete the study under NEPA's current open-end agreement.

Ms. McMahon stated that NEPA staff has revised the 2024-2025 UPWP to add the supplemental planning funds and the scope of work for the project. In addition, the table that shows all of the MPO plans and their effective dates has also been updated to reflect the completion of the Public Participation Plan, Title VI Plan and LEP Plan and the 2025 TIP.

Ms. McMahon stated that we need an action to approve of the amended UPWP and SR 2001 Study Scope of Work. Mr. Mrozinski requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the amended 2024-2025 UPWP and SR 2001 Study Scope of Work. A motion was made by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Mr. Kufro, to approve the UPWP amendment and scope of work. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan

Ms. McMahon stated that Michael Baker International has prepared a scope of work for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan. The plan is expected to be completed by the end of June 2025. Michael Baker International added implementation goals into the scope of work.

Ms. Smith asked to see revisions to the scope of work that identify immediate next steps toward implementation and to include the first identified implementation step to be included in the scope of work. Ms. McMahon said that NEPA will coordinate with Michael Baker and the committee to amend the scope of work. Ms. McMahon asked that the scope of work be approved by email ballot to keep the project moving. Mr. Jordan asked if this would affect the 12-month timeline for the project. Ms. McMahon stated that the funding for the plan expires at the end of June 2025, so the timeline cannot be adjusted.

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

Ms. McMahon stated that the final version of the TIP has been finalized and posted on the NEPA website. The MPO is waiting on a funding table from Central Office in order to be able to submit the TIP. The State Transportation Commission will meet in August to approve the Statewide TIP, and then it will be sent to FHWA/FTA for final approval.

Commissioner Ahner asked for a status on the MPO's poor condition bridges, how to add them to the TIP, and if there was any federal money that could be applied for to accelerate them. He highlighted five bridges in Carbon County that need repairs, including a bridge that is used to access the Beltsville Dam and receives high traffic. Ms. McMahon stated that projects on the TIP typically do not have accelerated timelines. She mentioned that two bridges in Carbon County have recently been added to the 2025 TIP under a municipal bridge bundle line item. NEPA staff is scheduled to meet with the Carbon County Commissioners next week to discuss funding for the county bridges. Mr. Kufro stated that the biggest challenge the MPO faces is balancing the region's needs with available funding. He also noted that much of the federal funding that is available can only be applied to projects that are going to construction in the near future.

e) Active Transportation Plan

Ms. Bottiger provided a presentation on the Active Transportation Plan. She stated that progress is ongoing. the Bicycle Level-of-Stress analysis is complete, and a draft will be sent to MPO staff for internal review. The analysis was conducted using PennDOT data such as truck traffic, shoulder widths,

posted speeds, and parking to map areas across the region by cycling skill. She said that the next step will be to schedule and conduct regional listening sessions in each county.

f) Eastern PA Freight Study

Ms. McMahon stated that the Eastern PA Freight Alliance (EPFA) is still working with consultants from WSP to revise the draft Freight Study before presentation to the committee. The plan will move much of the freight profile data to an appendix to make the document more readable. Work also needs to be done to ensure that recommendations can be implemented. One of the main recommendations is that the EPFA continue to meet on a regular basis. A similar group in the New York Metropolitan Area is being considered as a model. When the plan is finalized, it will be presented in the Fall. Each MPO is being asked to approve the freight plan by the end of the year.

g) 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. McMahon stated NEPA MPO has been asked to begin developing the 2025-2027 UPWP. The previous work program only covered one year to offset UPWP and TIP development cycles, but that future programs will be returning to two years. NEPA staff received the work program guidance and is planning to hold a meeting of the UPWP Development Subcommittee in August. The MPO plans to have a draft ready by October 2024, and for the committee to approve the UPWP by December 2024.

4) New Member Orientation Presentation

a) New Member Orientation Presentation

Ms. McMahon provided a presentation to the new committee members (see attached). She also noted that staff has developed a new member orientation packet that has been sent to new Technical Committee and Policy Board members. It is also available on the NEPA website.

5) Other Business

None.

6) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.