

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

September 17, 2024, Technical Planning Committee Summary and Minutes **9:30 a.m.**

Attendees:

Rocky Ahner*
Marie Bishop
Casey Bottiger
John Christy*
Kerri Cutright
Nyomi Evans
Steve Fisher*
Brian Funkhouser
Doyle Heffley*
AJ Jordan*
Robert Manzella
Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*
Larry Peterson*
Emma Pugh

Organization:

Carbon Co. Commiss.
PennDOT District 4
Michael Baker Intl.
Monroe Co. Commiss.
PennDOT District 5
PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4
Michael Baker Intl.
PA House of Rep.
LANTA
Luzerne Co. Planning
Monroe Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 5
PennDOT District 4

Attendees:

Nick Raio*
Jeff Rai
Daniel Reese
Jennifer Ruth
Brenda Sacco
Richard Schlameuss*
Susan Smith*
Brian Snyder*
Nate Staruch
Scott Vottero

Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahan
Jonathan Shaw
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 5
Luzerne County GIS
PennDOT District 5
CCEDC
MCTA
Schuylkill Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
Monroe Co. Planning
PennDOT District 5

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 Policy Board and Technical Planning Committee:

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

Action 1: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2024, Technical Committee Business Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Schlameuss, seconded by Ms. Smith, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm an email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve an amendment to the 2023-2028 TIP to add FTA funding for the MCTA Maintenance Facility. A motion was made by Mr. Christy, seconded by Ms. Smith, to confirm the email ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm an email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve the Scope of Work for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan. A motion was made by Mr. Christy, seconded by Mr. Schlameuss, to confirm the email ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

1) Business Items

- a) Approval of Minutes from the July 16, 2024, Technical Committee Business Meeting
Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2024, Technical Committee Business Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Schlameuss, seconded by Ms. Smith, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- b) Confirmation of email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve an amendment to the 2023-2028 TIP to add FTA funding for the MCTA Maintenance Facility
Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm an email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve an amendment to the 2023-2028 TIP to add FTA funding for the MCTA Maintenance Facility. Ms. McMahon stated that the email ballot was passed with a vote of 10 yea, 0 nays. A motion was made by Mr. Christy, seconded by Ms. Smith, to confirm the email ballot. The motion passed unanimously.
- c) Confirmation of email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve the Scope of Work for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan
Ms. Meinhart-Fritz requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm an email ballot on August 28, 2024, to approve the Scope of Work for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan. Ms. McMahon stated that the email ballot was passed with a vote of 10 yea, 0 nays. A motion was made by Mr. Christy, seconded by Mr. Schlameuss, to confirm the email ballot. 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.

Statewide Action 1- Green Mountain Drive Bridge Rehabilitation- Add PE Phase and CON Phase as per MTF agreement. The source is the Multimodal Reserve Line Item.

Statewide Action 4- Weatherly Retaining Wall Replacement- Add CON Phase to the TIP. The source is the PROTECT Reserve Line Item.

Statewide Action 8- SR 611 Emergency Rock Slope Mitigation- Increase for archaeological monitoring. The source is the Deobligation Reserve Line Item

Interstate Action 1- I-80 Exit 308 Realignment- Increase CON Phase to cover various work orders. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item.

Interstate Action 2- I-80 Bridge Improvements- Increase to align with anticipated needs. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item.

Action 3- Raven Run Rd over Shenandoah Creek- Increase due to boring need. The sources are Co. Bridge 114 (Zimmerman Bridge) and the NEPA Highway & Bridge Regional Line Item.

Action 9- SR 611 Emergency Rock Slope Mitigation- Increase to cover Historical Resource Coordinator costs. The source is the NEPA Highway & Bridge Regional Line Item.

Action 10- St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction- Cash flow to assign available funds. The sources are multiple projects with funds being released.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status Update – TA/ARC/MTF/FLAP

Mr. Vottero provided an update on TA/ARC/MTF/FLAP projects in District 5. Mr. Fisher provided an update on TA/ARC/MTF/FLAP projects in District 4.

b) Active Transportation Plan

Ms. McMahon stated that the listening sessions in each county are underway. Sessions in Jim Thorpe and Pottsville have been held, with good discussion and attendance at each session. Ms. Bottiger provided a presentation on the current status of the Active Transportation Plan. Next steps for the plan include refining the Bicycle Level of Stress analysis based on methodologies from PennDOT District 1-0 and SEDA-COG, as well as working with MPO staff to explore a partnership with Strava. Listening sessions in Pike and Carbon County will be held this week. Ms. McMahon mentioned that a public survey is underway and that more information on it will be shared with committee members via email.

c) SR 2001 Section 405 Alternatives Study

Mr. Funkhouser provided a presentation on the current status of the SR 2001 Section 405 Alternatives Study. He stated that NEPA staff, Pike County, and Michael Baker met with District 4-0 executives to discuss the challenges associated with the project. The study will involve two phases, a planning phase, and an alternative identification phase. Michael Baker will continue to update the committee at future MPO meetings. The study is expected to be completed by December 2025.

d) Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan

Mr. Funkhouser provided a presentation on the current status of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan. Michael Baker is finalizing a budget with subconsultant Rockland Planning. Once the work order is finalized and signed by NEPA Alliance, work on the plan will begin. Ms. McMahon mentioned that any feedback received about transit during the ATP public outreach will be fed into the Coordinated Public Transit Plan, and that the two plans tie together. Next steps for the plan will be establishing a steering committee and beginning outreach to transit providers.

e) Eastern PA Freight Study

Ms. McMahon stated that the draft Freight Study has been sent out to committee members to review. The most recent version of the plan moved much of the freight profile data to an appendix to make the document more readable. One of the main recommendations of the plan is that the EPFA continue to meet on a regular basis. The EPFA would be established through an MOU and the group would work on implementing the recommendations of the plan. Many of the recommendations involve land use and zoning issues, so NEPA MPO is asking that the county planners be involved in the Alliance. A multi-MPO briefing on the plan will be held on October 9th from 1:00-2:30PM. Each MPO is being asked to approve the freight plan by the end of the year. Ms. Smith asked if members could share the draft plan with others within the county. Ms. McMahon said that the plan is still in a draft state, but it can be shared with other county agencies. Mr. Heffley shared concerns with the plan being developed too heavily on public opinion. He recommended focusing the plan on transportation data instead of land use and zoning.

f) 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. McMahon stated the NEPA staff has met with the UPWP steering committee. They reviewed many of the tasks in the current UPWP and began identifying tasks for the 2025-2027 UPWP. The UPWP Steering Committee will meet in early October to review the draft UPWP. The MPO plans to have a draft ready for the Technical Committee by October 2024, and for the committee to approve the UPWP by December 2024, following a 45-day comment period for FHWA. The UPWP is expected to be approved by the NEPA Board in January 2025, and then will be sent to PennDOT Central Office for approval.

g) National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program

Ms. McMahon stated that funding has been provided to Pennsylvania to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Funding was originally focused along Interstate Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFC). Now that AFCs have been built out, funding is being extended to community charging projects. This includes public parking, government buildings, large employers, and destinations. Planning Partners have been asked to review and rank prospective charging projects. More information will be available later in the year regarding how projects will be solicited. NEPA MPO expects to have the Technical Committee rank projects in Spring 2025.

Mr. Ahner stated that parking in Jim Thorpe is a problem and that a percentage of these cars are electric vehicles. He is interested in the potential for projects to begin addressing this problem. Ms. McMahon said that tourist destinations are eligible and is hopeful that the committee sees a lot of applications from the tourist-heavy towns in the MPO. She mentioned that Pennsylvania also submitted an application to the national NEVI discretionary fund for charging infrastructure along Route 6 in several locations. Mr. Box asked when the infrastructure would be built if the application is approved. Ms. McMahon estimated that if the application is approved, it could be in the next year to year in a half. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if Monroe County would be eligible in this round of funding. Ms. McMahon stated that Monroe County would be eligible. The county was ineligible for previous rounds because electric vehicle charging infrastructure was already built out along AFCs in Monroe County. Mr. Heffley recommended partnering with commercial businesses to submit applications. Ms. McMahon said that the funding does seek to partner with commercial businesses, when possible, but that the committee may be asked to rank projects where a commercial option is not available, or in low-income areas.

4) Other Business

Mr. Ahner thanked everyone for the good attendance at Carbon County's ATP Listening Session.

Ms. McMahon mentioned that PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) is expected to open sometime next week, and that more information on the program will be sent out to the committee members.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked District 5 to look at the SR 115 corridor project. Chestnuthill Township reports that the partial road closure has led to several near-miss collisions. She also asked that the landscaping for the roundabouts be reviewed.

Mr. Box thanked all the commissioners for their help with the ATP Listening Sessions. He also noted that Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Access Road funding is driven by NEPA and has been very successful over the years in funding millions of dollars in access road projects. The two projects in the NEPA MPO are being funded with federal dollars, and he encourages everyone to apply.

5) Adjournment

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