

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

December 15, 2020 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location:

Microsoft Teams Videoconference

Attendees:

David Alas
Ethan Baldwin
Marie Bishop*
David Bodnar*
Jim Brady
Chris Chapman
Brendan Cotter*
Steve Fisher
Micah Gursky
Doyle Heffley*
Peggy Howarth*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Chris Kufro
John Malinchok*
Randy Miller
Jim Mosca*

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PennDOT Central
PennDOT District 4-0
Carbon Co. Planning
STV
Luzerne Co. Planning
CCCT/LANTA
PennDOT District 4-0
St. Luke's Hospital
PA State Rep.
MCTA
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
Schuy. Planning Comm.
Orwigsburg Borough
PennDOT Central

Attendees:

Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*
John Petrini
Emma Pugh
Jeff Rai
Rich Roman
Susan Smith*
Matt Smoker
Brian Snyder*
Scott Vottero

Alan Baranski
Jeff Box
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahan
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

Monroe Co. Planning
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 4-0
PennDOT District 4-0
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 4-0
Schuylkill Co. Planning
FHWA
Pike Co. Planning
PennDOT District 5-0

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 Technical Planning Committee:

During the course of this meeting the MPO Technical Committee voted on the following actions:

Action 1: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: A motion to adopt the 2021 HSIP targets established by the state was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Mosca. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: A motion to adopt the 2021 PM-2 and PM-3 targets established by the state was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bodnar called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Baranski stated that we have some new representatives from PennDOT and FHWA assigned to our MPO. Ms. Mosca stated that David Alas from Central Office will be transitioning to take over the NEPA MPO from Dean Roberts. Mr. Baranski stated that Jamie Lemon from FHWA has taken an assignment on the west coast and Matt Smoker is returning as our FHWA representative.

1) Business Items

a) Approval of minutes from the October 20, 2020 Business Meeting

Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Cotter to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

a) District 4-0 and 5-0 2019-2022 TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

Information was included in the meeting packet which highlighted administrative actions on the 2021 TIP for District 4-0 and 5-0. Mr. Fisher highlighted actions for District 4-0 and Ms. Koenigkramer highlighted actions for District 5-0.

Action 1: SR 590 Pipes- increase PE phase to process supplement. The source is the NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item. Action 2: Milford to Matamoras Betterment- add utility phase for unforeseen sewer relocation. The source is the NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item. Action 3: Mill Pond over Pohopoco Creek- reduce to revised estimate and federalize project to use available BOF funds in the region. The sources are Golf Drive Buckhill Branch Bridge, Long Pond over Tunkhannock Creek and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 4: NEPA Bridge Preservation and Repairs- add phase with previous obligations to cover unpaid RR agreement invoice. Action 5: Mill Pond over Pohopoco Creek- Toll BOF with available deobligations and over fiscal constraint of federal funding type to release state funds. The source is Tobyhanna Creek Bridge II, Stony Creek Bridge, Off Network Bridges in PM4 and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Statewide Informational Action 1- MEC Phase 14- Completing the Connection- add project to the TIP. The source is the TAP Reserve Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 2- 209/115 Intersection Improvements- Phase 2- swapping CMAQ and HSIP funds on the construction phase of the project. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Action 6- 940 over Beaver Creek- increase to cover AUC which includes work orders for centerline repair, paint items, etc. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 7- NEPA Bridge Preservation and Repair 6- increase to cover supplement for design. Hollow Road Bridge- add phase to cover actual expenditures on 2021 TIP. Funds not encumbered in time on 2019 TIP. NEPA Bridge Preservation and Repair 5- increase to cover railroad supplement and anticipated work orders including concrete repairs. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 8- 715 over McMichaels Creek II- add FD and ROW phases to the TIP due to CEE anticipated in FFY 2021. Kunkletown Road over Princess Run- bridge no longer part of PM bundle. Add construction phase to make a standalone project. NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item- return STP deobligated funds to District 4. The sources are the Stites Tunnel Bridge, SR 2030 Ramp Bridge over I-80, Jim Thorpe Bridge, PA 309- McAdoo, PA 924 over 4030, RR and Mahanoy Creek and the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item.

Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked about the funding change for the 209/115 Intersection Improvements project. Ms. Koenigkramer stated that they hoped to let the project on the 2019 TIP using CMAQ funds but since it was delayed, they are swapping the CMAQ funds with HSIP funds since CMAQ funds are no longer eligible for use in Monroe County. Mr. Baranski stated that PennDOT tried to make the CMAQ funding work but they could not. Mr. Smoker stated that the decision about only using CMAQ funds in non-attainment counties was made in concurrence with Central Office and the planning partners and went into effect with the most recent TIP update.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None. Mr. Baranski noted that we received a copy of Monroe County Transportation Authority's Safety Plan. It is similar to the one provided by Carbon County Community Transit at the October meeting. The Safety Plan has to be shared with the MPO and PennDOT but does not require action.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status

Ms. Bishop provided an update on Major/Interstate projects in District 4-0. Ms. Bishop noted that the district also provided an update on highway projects from the cancelled November MPO meeting and that the let date for the SR 2002 project has changed. The project will not let in December because they are coordinating with the National Park Service on the project.

Mr. Vottero provided an update on Major/Interstate projects in District 5-0. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if there will be an opportunity to review the I-80 Traffic Study. Mr. Vottero stated that the study is under internal review and then it will be shared with external partners for review. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if the contract for the next phase of the I-80 project has been selected. Mr. Vottero stated that it went to McTish, with Pennoni as a subcontractor.

b) 2021 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Performance Measures (PM-1)

Ms. McMahon stated that the MPO is required to establish targets for safety performance measures each year. The performance measures include the number and rate of fatalities and serious injuries as well as non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. The MPO is required to establish targets within 180 days of PennDOT establishing its targets, by February 27, 2021. The MPO has the option to adopt the targets established by the state or establish our own quantifiable targets. Ms. McMahon stated that for the past three years, we have adopted the targets established by the state and we recommend doing so again. A motion to adopt the 2021 HSIP targets established by the state was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Mosca. The motion passed unanimously.

c) 2021 Pavement and Bridge Condition Performance Measures (PM-2) and CMAQ Performance Measures (PM-3)

Ms. McMahon stated that similar to the HSIP performance measure targets, we also have to adopt targets for performance measures for pavement and bridge condition and CMAQ. The pavement and bridge performance measures include percentage of pavements on the Interstate System and non-Interstate NHS roads in good and poor condition and the percentage of NHS bridge deck areas in good and poor condition. For PM-3, the performance measures are for Interstate and non-Interstate NHS reliability, truck travel and emission reductions for CMAQ projects. Ms. McMahon stated that we only adopt performance measures for PM-2 and PM-3 every two years. The MPO is required to establish targets within 180 days of PennDOT establishing its targets, by March 29, 2021. The MPO has the option to adopt the targets established by the state or establish our own quantifiable targets and we recommend adopting the targets established by the state. A motion to adopt the 2021 PM-2 and PM-3 targets established by the state was made by Ms. Howarth, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion passed unanimously.

d) PennDOT Transportation Funding Issues

Mr. Baranski stated that the state is facing a shortfall of transportation revenue as a result of the pandemic. With less economic activity, there has been less driving and as a result, lower gas taxes collected. The original estimates were that PennDOT was facing a \$600 million shortfall this year but those estimates have been revised down to about \$500 million. The legislature had passed a short-term

budget earlier in the year and consider legislation to fund the commonwealth for the rest of the year in November. PennDOT was seeking a bond to cover the shortfall but it was not addressed in the budget. The governor has provided short-term funding to keep projects moving but the issue needs to be addressed by the legislature in the new year. We are waiting to see what the impacts on TIP projects will be. Mr. Kufro stated that gas revenue is down as a result of the pandemic but there was already a trend of reduced gas tax revenue. The gas tax provides 75 percent of state funding which is used to leverage federal funds, which we could lose if state funding isn't provided. PennDOT requested to self-bond \$600 million to fund the department until July. They have revised the estimate to about \$475 million. They will know more after the new year when the legislature is back in session. Projects scheduled to let in December have been pushed back. The SR 61 paving project is one of them. The delay in December lettings may end up pushing other projects back as well. There are more projects ready than there is funding available. PennDOT is also looking at alternative funding including a P3 initiative for tolling interstate bridges. Mr. Mosca stated that there is a public comment opportunity on PennDOT Pathways. The PennDOT Pathways website has information about the funding issues and the public can comment until December 17th. Rep. Heffley stated that there was a lack of communication between PennDOT and the legislature which was not helpful in getting the funding issues resolved. Transportation funding is not the only area that has been impacted by the pandemic and the shutdowns. General revenues are down considerably as well and there will be more impacts across programs.

e) Functional Classification Review

Ms. McMahon stated that we are nearly finished with the functional classification review. We have had several calls with Central Office about the format that they want to receive the functional classification changes in. Paper maps with all of the changes have to be completed rather than the online maps that we used for the review. We are also completing the spreadsheets of the changes which have to show each individual change by segment and require several data points for each segment. We plan to submit everything to PennDOT by late December or early January. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz asked if Monroe County can assist with the mapping. Ms. McMahon stated that Ms. Ginocchetti is nearly done with creating the maps that are required. Ms. Smith asked how long the process has been. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz stated that the Monroe County review was two years ago. Mr. Snyder stated that the Pike County review was three years ago. Ms. McMahon stated that as time sensitive projects like the TIPs and Long Range Plan come up, we have to put the functional classification review aside to work on them. Mr. Baranski stated that Central Office has been clear that they want the changes submitted for the entire region, not by county. Mr. Smoker asked if we are also considering changes to the National Highway System. Ms. McMahon stated that we are and we have been in contact with Central Office about what is required for those changes. Ms. Smith asked if the submission will occur by the January meeting. Ms. McMahon stated that the January meeting is January 19th and we should have it done by then.

f) Highway Performance Monitoring System

Mr. Baranski stated that staff has completed our second year of HPMS data collection. It involved data collection and verification as over 90 sites. The information was submitted to Central Office at the beginning of December. Mr. Yelito stated that the data collection involves verification of data such as shoulder type and width, expansion opportunities, lane information and traffic signal timing. Mr. Smoker stated that the HPMS data collection is important for the development of performance measures.

4) Other Business

Mr. Baranski stated that we have received information about multimodal projects in our region. Ms. McMahon stated that there are three PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund projects submitted in our region. One in Monroe County was from Middle Smithfield Township for sidewalks along SR 209. There are two in Schuylkill County- one for a local bridge replacement and the other for paving in Kline Township. Ms. Smith stated that the bridge project is in Deer Lake Borough.

Ms. Smith asked about scheduling meetings with legislators to educate them about the MPO and funding process. There are two new legislators in Schuylkill County who might benefit from it. We discussed it as part of the strategic plan development. Mr. Baranski stated that NEPA regularly meets with legislators to discuss all NEPA programs, including transportation. It might be helpful to include the county planners in those meetings. Ms. Meinhart-Fritz stated it would be good for all of the representatives from each county to have a similar meeting. Mr. Gursky agreed that meeting with the legislators about transportation issues would be helpful. Rep. Heffley stated that it would be beneficial to the legislators, especially the new ones. Mr. Box stated that we would like to meet with them, especially the new Schuylkill County legislators and it would make sense to do so by county. Rep. Heffley stated that the new members are sworn in on January 5th and the session begins on January 11th. He will provide contact information for the new legislators.

5) Adjournment

There being no further business, the NEPA MPO Technical Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.