

Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

February 16, 2021 Technical Planning Committee

Meeting Summary and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location:

Microsoft Teams Videoconference

Attendees:

David Alas
Ethan Baldwin
Dave Bekisz*
David Bodnar*
Chris Chapman
John Christy*
Brendan Cotter*
Steve Fisher*
Micah Gursky
George Halcovage
Kathy Henderson
Boots Hetherington
Peggy Howarth*
Vanessa Koenigkramer*
Chris Kufro
Amanda Leindecker

Organization:

PennDOT Central
PennDOT Central
STS
Carbon Co. Planning
Luzerne Co. Planning
Mo. Co. Commissioner
CCCT/LANTA
PennDOT District 4-0
St. Luke's Hospital
Sch. Co. Commissioner
CCEDC
Sch. Co. Commissioner
MCTA
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0
PennDOT District 5-0

Attendees:

Jim Mosca*
Christine Meinhart-Fritz*
Mike Mrozinski*
Emma Pugh
Jeff Rai
Dave Rostron
Jay Schectman
Susan Smith*
Matt Smoker
Scott Vottero
Tom Yashinski

Alan Baranski
Nettie Ginocchetti
Kate McMahan
Daniel Yelito

Organization:

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

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 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 December 15, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 2: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the January 19, 2021 email ballot. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Cotter. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 3: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve Amendment 1. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Cotter. The motion passed unanimously.

Action 4: Mr. Bodnar requested a motion to endorse the NEPA MPO's participation in the development of a proposal for a multi-MPO regional freight plan. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1) Business Items

a) Approval of minutes from the December 15, 2020 Business Meeting

Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Mrozinski to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Confirmation of the Email Ballot from January 19, 2021

Ms. McMahon stated that the amendment to add the SR 507 over Tributary to Lake Wallenpaupack bridge to the TIP was approved by email ballot on January 19, 2021 by a vote of 10 yea, 1 nay. Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to confirm the January 19, 2021 email ballot. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Cotter. The motion passed unanimously.

2) TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

a) District 4-0 and 5-0 2021-2024 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- TOC- Operator- NEPA- increase to cover ongoing ITS operations support staffing. SR 2012 over Pocono Creek- increase to cover AUC for work orders including overlay of bridge and close out project. The sources are the I-80 Bridge Ramp to SR 8024. The source is PA 309- McAdoo. Interstate Informational Item 1- I-80- I380 to Tannersville Resurface- adjusting pro rata from 90/10 to 100 Federal. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 2- I-80/ exit 308 Realignment- increasing FD phase for internal charges and to complete the noise report. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Action 2- 209/115 Int. Imp. Phase 2- increase to revised utility cost. NEPA High Friction Surface 2021- increase to revised estimate to obligate for advertisement. The sources are 209 Schafer School House FD and UTL phases. Action 3- SR 1013 Slide- Increase CON phase to process work orders. The source is the NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item. Action 4- SR 1017 Slide- Increase CON phase to process work orders. The source is SR 2002 Slide and NEPA 4-0 Highway Line Item. Action 5- SD Fixed Bridges by DF- increase to cover internal charges to date and for supplement to finalize PS&E for 209 over NRR removal. Action 6- SR 209 over Sawkill Creek- increase PE phase to cover AUC. Action 7- 209/115 Int. Imp- Phase 2- advance funding with deobligation from 443 Roadway Improvements to swap CAQ with HSIP since CAQ can no longer be used in Monroe County. Action 8- SR 715 over Pocono Creek- increase revised cost estimate including YOE from design field view and cash flow over 2 years. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 9- SR 4008 over WB Schuylkill- Add construction funds for purchase of materials for department force project. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Action 10- Hollow Road Bridge- increase for supplement and internal charges. The source is the NEPA Highway and Bridge Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 3- I-80/Exit 308 Realignment- increase for supplement to complete design review comments for PS& E preparation and ongoing utility coordination. The source is the Interstate Contingency Line Item. Statewide Informational Item 1- St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction- increasing PE to support development of future applications for Federal Discretionary funding grant opportunities such as INFRA. The source is the Highway Reserve Line Item. Interstate Informational Item 4- Interstate GR Upgrade Ph. 2- Manual Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) on I-80 in Carbon, I-380 in Monroe and I-81 in Schuylkill. The source is the Interstate GR Upgrades Line Item. Action 11- Reloc. Msg. Board 78WB to 81NB- add match to sSTP funds for selection TSMO project. The source is the P/S Box Beam Bridge Bundle Project. Action 12- NEPA Br. Preserve & Rpr. 4- add funding to cover

a RR invoice. SR 2004- Emergency Bridge Demo- add state match for project to TIP for emergency bridge demo as a result of Tropical Storm Isaias. The source is the SR 715/611 Intersection project.

Amendment 1- Add SR 209 Dept. Force Base Repair, SR 534 Dept. Force Base Repair, SR 611 Dept. Force Base Repair, SR 3017 Dept. Force Base Repair, SR 61 Dept. Force Overlay, SR 443 Dept. Force Overlay, SR 924 Dept. Force Overlay and SR 2008 Dept. Force Overlay to the TIP. The source is the STU-Urban Line Item Reserve. The addition of these projects was discussed during 2021 TIP development.

Mr. Bodnar requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve Amendment 1. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Cotter. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Transit Amendments and Administrative Actions

None. Mr. Cotter stated that he has provided NEPA with a copy of CCCT's TAM Performance Measures. The only asset that CCT has is rolling stock. The goal was to have no more than 39% of rolling stock beyond a state of good repair and 0% was beyond a state of good repair. The goal next year is 4%. A copy of the document will be included with the meeting minutes. No action is required by the MPO. Ms. Howarth and Mr. Bekisz indicated that they will have similar documents for MCTA and STS.

3) Transportation Planning & Programs

a) Current Project Status

Mr. Fisher provided an update on bridge projects in District 4-0. Mr. Vottero provided an update on bridge projects in District 5-0.

b) PennDOT Transportation Funding Issues

Mr. Baranski stated that this is an ongoing topic. Funding issues have been exacerbated by the impacts of the pandemic. PennDOT has initiated the Pathways project to identify alternative funding sources. Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet held a virtual briefing on the Pathways initiative last week. A P3 bridge tolling initiative will be the first initiative. It involves replacing large structures through the private sector and tolling the bridges. A committee to identify a priority list of potential bridges has been created. The 2021 funding shortfalls have been closed by federal COVID relief funding. Mr. Mosca stated that the COVID relief funding provided PennDOT with \$407 million which mostly closed the funding gap. The funding allows PennDOT to keep projects moving forward. The FAST Act was extended through September so we are looking forward to seeing what happens with a reauthorization bill.

c) Functional Classification Review

Ms. McMahon stated that we have submitted the functional classification changes to PennDOT Central Office. The submission package included a detailed spreadsheet of each requested change by segment and individual county maps showing all the requested changes. There are 84 changes in total. In addition to the functional classification changes, we are requesting additions to the Federal-aid System and National Highway System in some cases. Mr. Smoker noted that FHWA can approve the functional classification changes at the state level but changes to the National Highway System must be approved by FHWA in Washington.

d) PennDOT/FHWA Planning Process Review of NEPA MPO

Mr. Baranski stated that PennDOT Central Office and FHWA are conducting reviews of MPOs operationally. Larger MPOs with urbanized populations over 250,000 have a formal certification review every 4-5 years. FHWA and Central Office are conducting similar reviews for smaller MPOs. NEPA

received notification that our review will occur this spring. NEPA is currently compiling of the necessary documentation to submit for the review. Central Office and FHWA will review the MPO's documents, processes and compliance with regulatory requirements. Once the review is complete, a formal letter with recommendations and commendations will be issued. Mr. Mosca noted that Mr. Alas is NEPA's Central Office rep and will be co-leading the review. Mr. Alas noted that the review is in the beginning stages and will keep the committee updated.

e) Eastern PA Regional Freight Study

Mr. Baranski stated that we are launching a regional freight plan. Over the past few years, staff has attended various freight events and sessions. We identified the development of a regional freight plan in our work program. We have been in discussion with Lehigh Valley and Lackawanna-Luzerne about collaborating on a multi-MPO plan. The discussions have extended to the Reading MPO and Lebanon MPO as well for a five-MPO plan to cover the I-78 and I-81 corridors. We are seeking supplemental planning funds from Central Office for the development of the plan and the necessary matching funds will be split between the MPOs. We will be using the regional freight plan guidance document to help develop the plan. All of the participating MPOs are seeking an endorsement from their committees to move ahead with the joint freight plan.

Mr. Bodnar requested a motion to endorse the NEPA MPO's participation in the development of proposal for a multi-MPO regional freight plan. A motion was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Howarth. The motion passed unanimously.

f) OMB Potential Revisions to Metropolitan Statistical Areas

Mr. Baranski stated that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued a notice in the Federal Register about a recommendation to increase the population threshold for the establishment of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) from 50,000 to 100,000. This change has a potential impact on the designation of urbanized areas with populations from 50,000 to 100,000 currently established as MPOs. There are currently 9 MSAs in Pennsylvania that are potentially affected including the East Stroudsburg MSA and a total of 144 MSAs across the country that may be impacted. NEPA has been in touch with the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) who were informed that the proposed change was not intended to impact MPOs but that could be the result. NEPA has been in touch with some of the other MPOs in PA that are affected, as well as Central Office. Comments on the Federal Register notice are due by March . NEPA will prepare comments for submission and share it with the committee before the March MPO meeting. We also plan to be in touch with the federal legislators in our region on the issue.

Mr. Mosca stated that Central Office is looking into the matter and will discuss it internally and determine potential impacts. PennDOT will also work with the MPOs on their comments and set up a call with the MPOs. Commissioner Halcovage stated that we need to be unified and have a collective voice on it since such as approach will have more impact. He is willing to help with the federal delegation since they interact with them regularly. Commissioner Hetherington agreed with Commissioner Halcovage, stating that he appreciated the opportunity to attend the MPO meeting and learn more about the issue. Mr. Gursky asked where the change is coming from and what the intent is. Mr. Baranski stated that it has been decades since the last time the definition was looked reviewed. They looked at it in 2010 but did not make a change. Mr. Gursky stated that the change could have impacts on many federal programs. A change in McAdoo to being an urban area resulted in St. Luke's having to close a rural health clinic. Mr. Baranski agreed that many programs can be affected by the change.

g) Meeting with New Schuylkill County State Representatives

Ms. McMahan stated that as we discussed at the December meeting, we have set up a virtual meeting with Representative Kerwin and Representative Twardzik to discuss the MPO structure and process as

well as current projects. The meeting will be held on February at 10am. We have invited the other members of the state and federal delegation, the commissioners, MPO members and NEPA Board members. NEPA will provide a presentation along with PennDOT. Mr. Baranski stated that if there is interest, we can set up similar meetings in the other counties.

4) Other Business

Mr. Baranski stated that the Pike County Commissioners have sent a letter to PennDOT to add five county-owned bridges to the TIP. The county is using their \$5 registration fee funds and bond funding to replace the county-owned bridges. It has been submitted to Central Office and will then be added to the TIP.

5) Adjournment

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