1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rebert called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.
2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2019

Chairman Rebert asked if there were any questions or comments about the January 17, 2019 Coordinating Committee Meeting minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to approve the January 17, 2019 Coordinating Committee Meeting minutes. Mr. Kilmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PENNDOT UPDATE ON MAJOR PROJECTS

Chairman Rebert gave an update on the major projects.

Mr. Rudderow asked PennDOT is going to start with the widening of the corridor at the intersection of SR 222 and SR 73 instead of the installation of the roundabout. Chairman Rebert said, typically, it would be widened, which would continue to move traffic around. Mr. Rudderow said there is construction being done at Maidencreek Appliance. The Township is interested in keeping them as a business in the community. Chairman Rebert said PennDOT is done with the claim there and the business owners are happy with the outcome and are not going anywhere.

Mr. Swan said that, at the last meeting, the estimated let date for SR 222 and Long Lane is the end of 2021 for construction. Chairman Rebert said, that until PennDOT works through the ROW phase and have the let date set in stone, it will probably last a solid two construction seasons ending in 2022. Mr. Swan asked for an estimated date for this project. Chairman Rebert said it will be listed on the report next meeting.

Chairman Rebert said the project manager for the SR 422 (29M) Reconstruction will be coming to the Technical and Coordinating meetings in May 2019. Preliminary Engineering will be explained with the plan to move forward. A meeting will also be scheduled between the District staff and Mr. Shifflet (Central Office) to work on a financial plan for the $650 million.

Mr. Swan said the estimated let date was pushed out over two years. Chairman Rebert said it is due to design modifications required by archaeology issues at the bridge east of I-176.

Ms. Reed asked PennDOT not to discount the adding the N. Wyomissing Boulevard Bridge. She is concerned that, if the project goes through without adding the bridge, it will never be built. It is critical to the development in the City of Reading with a connection to the River Road Extension project, to the development in Bern Township, the Gateway Program, and the connection to West Reading with the new Drexel Medical School opening. She asked the board to keep the bridge in mind and be actively pursued in both schematics and financing. Mr. Swan said this was brought up at the last meeting. The consensus was to have this bridge advance separate from the bypass project and possibly put it in the 2021 TIP. Ms. Reed agreed but is concerned that it will be like the
South 9th Street Bridge, was never built. She wants this bridge to be considered as part of this entire project.

Mr. Rudderow asked, with the high dollar amount on the SR 422 (29M) Reconstruction project, will that be the only project that we will focus on in the future. Will the other projects be far enough along? Where does this kind of money come from? It was stated that there are concerns about the condition of the current roadway. When you look at $650 million and add all the other projects and are full steam ahead on a major artery in need of repair, the other project might get delayed or pushed out of they are not already in the pipeline. Chairman Rebert said there are a few ways to look at SR 422. The project could be broken into pieces. Bridges need to be taken care of first so that there are no bridges with weight restrictions on the bypass and interchanges. If we do it this way, reconstruction could last for the next fifteen years. Finance options need to be looked at. A public, private partnership (P3) can be entertained. Someone is brought in to front the money, build it and get reimbursed over time. Those payments over time usually extend out thirty years. Discretionary money can be looked into as well. Mr. Rudderow asked, within District 5, how does this $650 million project rank as far as what the other counties in Pennsylvania need as well. Chairman Rebert said if this is bid as one complete project, it may be bigger than anything that has happened in PA, including sections of I-95. The biggest job PennDOT has on the books now is $500 million on I-80 in the East Stroudsburg area.

Mr. Swan asked Mr. Piper for the total annual TIP budget for RATS. Mr. Piper said that the TIP right now shows about $85 million per year. Chairman Rebert said that much of that money could not be used for the West Shore Bypass project. Mr. Swan asked how this project would be paid for. How much was spent so far on the Preliminary Engineering phase? Chairman Rebert said we can track down the amount. Mr. Lerch asked, as a body, what can we do to support/obtain that kind of plan. Chairman Rebert said that this will be one of the biggest jobs that Pennsylvania will take on. It won’t be the first time a large amount of money was given out.

4. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

- Commissioner Barnhardt handed information regarding the transformation of this community with rebuilding/reconstructing of the 422 Bypass. He came upon the idea that, while PennDOT is reconstructing the bypass over a lengthy period, it may be time for Berks County to engage the resources of PennDOT to develop passive recreation on the either side of the river. This would be from Stonecliff Park to Canal Street. During that period of time, whether it is PennDOT or the County, ROW might be acquired for trails, biking, pedestrians, scenic overlooks and benches.

Commissioner Barnhardt said that there is not a lot of opportunity for recreational growth on the western side of the Schuylkill River. There will be some growth in the area around Schlegel Park. There is more opportunity on the Reading side for development and potential housing in the area near Reading Community College.
Commissioner Barnhardt said that we need to give people the opportunity to want to stay here and live here. We need to engage county leaders, PennDOT, Senator Schwank, Planning Commission, City Council, and RATS. There are approximately 72 property owners along both sides of the river and half are either the City of Reading, Reading Redevelopment Authority, the County of Berks, and West Reading Borough. The others are private owners or Norfolk Southern properties. If PennDOT is agreeable to the conversation, as they acquire property for the US 422 project, if there are portions of property that are not directly needed for highway construction, the county could step forward and acquire the land from them, private property owners and maybe turnovers from the Redevelopment Authority for some reasonable purchase price.

Commissioner Barnhardt said that this plan might take 15 years to complete. Could a pedestrian bridge be built from Confluence Park over to the Reading side for people to continue down from Confluence Park to the east side of the river? Ms. Reed said all of this exists in the RiverPlace Master Plan. It was mapped so it would help the effort. The idea placed back in the RiverPlace days was a pedestrian bridge that would go across Confluence Park and would have been a bicycle/pedestrian path. The highway plan has now changed and the RACC Bridge will stay in place. Originally, there was a thought of removing that bridge and putting a bicycle lane across the Bingaman Street Bridge. There is also a potential for housing around Canal Street, as well. If some positive feedback is received from PennDOT, more details will be released. This is a “once in a hundred years” opportunity to make a change. Shame on us if we improve the bypass without improving what borders the bypass.

Mr. Rudderow asked if his vision/thinking for this project is just along the lines of recreation. Is their room for restaurants along the river? Commissioner Barnhardt said that would pertain to private investment. He is not spearheading the housing/private investment portion. He is spearheading the opportunity to provide this area for recreation. There are available sites along the east side of the river to consider private investments.

Ms. Reed asked if the county would consider extending the park land from Stonecliff Park to Confluence Point. Commissioner Barnhardt said yes and he hopes it will eventually become under one ownership. Ms. Reed said the Confluence Point Master Plan design was nice because it floods down there. Commissioner Barnhardt said that, even on some of the private property, there may be an easement with property owners that would allow gravel trails to be put in. Benches and overlooks may be put in on the redevelopment owners land like West Reading or the City of Reading. This can all be done in an agreeable fashion.

Mr. Lerch asked Ms. Reed to explain the plan she mentioned. Ms. Reed said the plan goes back to the early 2000’s regarding the RiverPlace Corporation. Currently, there is a small entity from RiverPlace Corporation that is still in with the Penn Corridor. It is no longer active but had the potential to have done a lot of development along the river. It never went forward. The concept of RiverPlace went from the Confluence Park along the Tully and the Schuylkill River to Canal Street. There was an idea of an
amphitheater. It was supposed to be an open-trail park system. It was unfortunate that it never took off. The potential of being able to do that, especially pre-recession, was strong. Commissioner Barnhardt said he served on that committee and thought there was too much focus on building things as opposed to trying to use this concept. Let’s enjoy the scenic beauty of the river. If private entities want to build amphitheaters and restaurants for a profit, they can. We provide the environment for people to come in and enjoy the area. There is more opportunity for this on the Reading side than the West Reading/Wyomissing side. Ms. Reed said that RiverPlace plan is still available and ideas can be pulled from it.

Commissioner Barnhardt said there needs to be a single responsible party and not three or four municipalities and 15 other entities trying to figure out who is responsible. It is better if it all comes under one umbrella. Mr. Rudderow said that he agrees with the comments. There are a lot of cities that have looked at areas and revitalized and have now economically helped those communities. That is why he asked if this project was specific to trails and parks. It is not the county’s job to revitalize but the developer or interested party who wants to make the investment. Part of the vision includes this idea. This could be a win-win for that whole stretch. It will attract developers who will see an opportunity and people will go there and enjoy it. Ms. Reed said that anything that helps potential developers see that there is a cooperative plan is reasonable. She said there will be property changes coming soon with the Dana property.

Mr. Lerch said that the work done with the Mt. Penn Preserve came along beautifully. This is a different approach but anything that helps promote inter-municipal agreements with people who are talking about it amongst different municipalities is a good thing. It is good for developers to hear and see these things. Now is the time to do this. Commissioner Barnhardt said that this project should have been discussed two years ago. Mr. Rudderow said that the economy has improved to where there is probably a better chance that potential developers interested in a project like this one now.

- Chris Spohn introduced himself as the Director of Operations and Project Development for the Hamburg Area School District. He took over that position in January 2019 after being the high school principal for 13 years. Because of his Army Engineering background, he was able to take over the facilities but also, the other 40% of his job is to work with redevelopment in the northern Berks area.

Hamburg Area School District covers 104 square miles with 7 boroughs and townships. The changes that are coming towards Berks County due to industrial development are recognized. It will cause a ripple effect. How do we make sure that everyone in that area grows as the area is developed? As a school district, because we encompass all the areas as a footprint, he will take a lead on this moving forward. There was a meeting with Planning Commission staff regarding what steps must be taken.

Mr. Spohn said Hamburg Borough will be working on a Joint Comprehensive Plan. They know the transportation system along I-78/Rt. 61 and the land usage coming off each of those exits is the No. 1 priorities for the people living in that area. He is excited to be a part of this transportation process. He looks forward to working with RATS.
• Ms. Reed said there is a request from the College Heights community and the City of Reading regarding traffic calming as part of the Hampden Boulevard repaving project. They ask that PennDOT consider designing options such as bile lanes and medians to calm the traffic speeding situation. She understands that the road resurfacing project will be let in 2020. She hopes PennDOT can meet and speak to City Council and College Heights to come to agreement on the traffic calming issues. She can have someone from City Council explain the situation in more detail at the next Coordinating Committee meeting. Chairman Rebert said there have been a few meetings already. Ms. Reed said the city wants to work with PennDOT to stop the street from being a speedway. Ms. Reed said that this also impact Muhlenberg Township. Mr. Lerch agreed.

5. PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2019 TIP

Ms. Leindecker gave an update on Amendments/Modifications to FFY 2019-2022 Highway TIP from December 24, 2018 through February 27, 2019.

Statewide Administrative Actions – There are two (2) Statewide Administrative Actions. One of these adds federal funding for the Birdsboro Sidewalk and ADA Ramp Transportation Alternatives project. The second adds funding to the Wetland Mitigation portion of the I-78 reconstruction project.

Amendments – There is one (1) Amendment. This project adds federal funding for resurfacing and safety improvements to SR 4028 (Old Rt. 22) between Lenhartsville Borough and Krumsville in Greenwich Township.

Administrative Actions – There are seven (7) Administrative Actions. Each of these shift funding within existing projects based on needs.

MOTION: Mr. Kilmer made a motion to approve the one amendment. Mr. Lerch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Rudderow asked for an explanation for the amendment. Mr. Piper said that the reason it needs to be done as an amendment is because the funding is being shifted. It was originally supposed to be state funded. However, there is no current state capital budget approval for the project. For PennDOT to spend state money for a project it needs to be on a legislatively-approved capital budget. Because it is not, they need to use federal dollars. The project did not have federal dollars before. The use of federal funding is why the project is required to be listed as an amendment.

6. REPORT ON “PENNDOT CONNECTS POWERED BY COMMUNITIES” INITIATIVE

Mr. Piper said that last year, there was a training session held for municipal officials introducing the PennDOT Connects process. PennDOT asked us to expand upon that this year. The sessions are scheduled for April 15, 2019. There will be two sessions; one in the
afternoon and one in early evening. This will be an attempt to allow both municipal employees and more elected officials to attend.

The intent of the program is to explain the PennDOT Connects Program and how municipalities can get involved working with the Department and blending municipal goals with a proposed project. This means making sure that we and PennDOT understand what the municipal plans are as we go through the planning and programming process and, if possible, incorporate them into a project that is good for both the state and the community.

Mr. Rudderow asked if this date is firm. Mr. Piper said yes, but we have not formally advertised this program yet. Mr. Rudderow stated that the PSATS Convention is scheduled for the April 14th – 17th. Most municipal supervisors will be in Hershey, PA. Is there an opportunity to find a better day? Ms. Reed said that City Council meets that day as well. Mr. Golembiewski said they were trying to coordinate PennDOT District staff, County Planning staff and the Agricultural Center auditorium. We will investigate changing the date of this session. (The sessions were moved to April 24, 2019.)

7. REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF STC ISSUED REPORTS

- 2019 TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE REPORT AND 12-YEAR PROGRAM KICKOFF

Mr. Piper said that, as PennDOT begins to move into the next update of the 12-Year Program, they issue a Transportation Performance Report, which looks back at the actions that occurred within several different categories over the two years since the last program update. It is a report card on the system.

The five categories are:

Safety (Reducing Fatalities and Injuries)
- 2 of 16 measures reflect good performance
- 14 of 16 measures reflect marginal performance with opportunities to improve

Mobility (Moving People and Goods)
- 11 of 15 measures reflect good performance
- 4 of 15 measures reflect marginal performance with opportunities to improve

Preservation (Maintaining Transportation Assets)
- 1 of 5 measures reflect good performance
- 4 or 5 measures reflect marginal performance with opportunities to improve
- The state has committed $22.3 million to pothole repairs through June 30, 2019

Accountability (Managing Resources and Business Processes)
- 3 of 8 measures reflect good performance
- 5 of 8 measures reflect marginal performance with opportunities to improve

Funding (Investing for the Future)
- This section reviews past investments and examines projections for future funding and issues that will have an impact on needs.
For more details, please see the full report at (http://www.talkpatransportation.com/2019TPR/)
Beginning Monday, March 11, 2019, the State Transportation Commission (STC) opened its on-line public comment period on the 12-Year Program update. It is a 45-day period that will extend through April 26, 2019. An on-line survey asks for the public’s opinions on how transportation funding should be allocated across the various priorities and for specific project recommendations. As of last evening, there were over 2,000 completed surveys submitted. There was an on-line public meeting conducted last evening by the State Transportation Commission, which was hosted by Secretary Leslie Richards, Dep. Secretary Jim Ritzman and STC Commissioner Khoury.

Mr. Piper said that all the feedback that goes to the State Transportation Commission is coded by area. The information regarding Berks County will be forwarded to the MPO. It will help build our needs list for the 12-Year Program, the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the 4-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Ritzman said that the Transportation Performance Report was a story board format. Each of the measures has trend lines and access to other data that supports how it was graded. Some areas are unclear as to which way they should be graded. This changed PennDOT’s attention in the 2019 program development process. There were additional incentives for local bridges investments. There is an extensive portfolio of local bridges that will be improving. When you call attention to something and sending money in that direction, things can change. The balancing act is always tricky. If you take money from one place to put in another place, the voids are somewhere else.

Mr. Ritzman said that the State Transportation Commission came out with three reports in February 2019 and all have good backgrounds for the value they bring. The first report listed where the issues and what should be addressed before allocating money to projects.

Inter-city passenger rail is not only expensive to build; it is expensive to operate year after year. The consultant team was concerned when putting this report together but pleased that they found success factors with Inter-city passenger rail service across the country.

Mr. Ritzman said there were 1,200 people that participated in the on-line public meeting last evening. This presentation is extremely timely.

- **RISKS TO TRANSPORTATION FUNDING IN PA**

Mr. Ritzman said that the report looks at several different factors that have the potential to make significant changes in the availability of funding going forward in implementing projects on the current TIP, the next TIP and throughout the course of the next 12-Year Program that is being developed. It shows why it was done, identifies resources, looks at risks and comes up with conclusions. All that we do with these funds improves safety, mobility, economy and quality of life. If funds are not available, we cannot maintain and run our systems effectively or efficiently.
Mr. Ritzman explained that we need $2.5 billion additionally in annual funding to fully address the needs of our Interstate system. The National Highway System and bridges need an additional $1.8 billion to be maintained. Public Transit needs $1.2 billion for maintenance and condition of the vehicles. There continues to be extensive damage to our infrastructure. This past year, we are in the range of $125-$140 million worth of damage from flooding and land slide events. We do not routinely budget for this level. Typically, we budget $25 million a year and have a balance left at the end of the year.

There are other issues that put pressure on the existing resources. There are a great number of local roads and bridges in Pennsylvania that are not getting as much funding as need through this system. There are changes in the safety and guiderail regulations from FHWA, which will cost PennDOT approximately $820 million more per year. There is $35 million a year needed to maintain the ITS systems, and another $150 million to finish implementing Real ID. $9 million more per year is needed to update driver and vehicle services and DMV centers around the state.

There is a need to become MS4 Storm water compliant and money to cover emergency projects. Upgrades are needed to meet ADA on the transit side, complete fleet replacements, and maintaining the PennDOT county facilities are applicable, as well.

The purpose of this study is to look at existing revenues that we are spending in our FY 2019 program. What are the issues surrounding those dollars tied to specific projects for their use in the upcoming FY 2021 TIP and 12-Year Program?

- Federal funding is the first risk. PennDOT received approximately $1.6 billion a year of FHWA funding to incorporate into the program. There is certainty through September 2020. This is when the current Federal Transportation Funding bill expires. After that, PennDOT is hopeful to receive the same amount as last year. The last program, $70 billion of Federal General Fund money was put into the Highway Trust Fund to get us to the numbers we have. There would need to be a $.12 gasoline tax increase at the federal level just to keep us flat for transportation funding. The FAST Act only runs through FFY 2020. So far, Congress has been backing up the money going into the Highway Trust Fund with the general fund dollars. In 2021, when the FAST Act runs out, the Highway Trust Fund goes insolvent and drops almost in half if nothing is done to change the formula. Unless the FAST Act is reauthorized, and new funding sources are identified, there is approximately $6 billion at risk to PA through FFY 2029-2030.

- Mr. Ritzman said the second risk is the Pennsylvania Vehicle Sales Tax Revision Repeal - Part of Act 89. This includes a provision that when we reach 2023, additional money would come from the state’s vehicle sales tax and would go into the transit funds. If this provision of Act 89 is repealed, when Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission payments to PennDOT are reduced in FY 2022-2023, it could cost PA another $3.6 billion dollars.
• The litigation has been filed against the Turnpike Commission by national motor carrier organizations based on those funds collected by the Turnpike being diverted to PennDOT for other uses. The Turnpike Commission has withheld their full allocation for this fiscal year. This means that $400 million in transit funds are not being distributed to transit authorities. The combined impact on the vehicle sales tax and the Turnpike lawsuit could be roughly $5.8 billion lost to transit through FFY 2029-2030.

• If the vehicle sales tax is not carried out and the provisions of Act 89 are extended and still require the Turnpike Commission to keep paying full funding to PennDOT for another five years, that would mean the Turnpike Commission incurs another $2 billion worth of debt. Over that five-year period, it would increase their annual debt service costs and would further reduce their bond rating.

• The PA fiscal budget code says it will continue to lower State Motor License funding that the State Police are receiving annually. The code is not law but was adopted by the legislature and they can change the fiscal code at any time. This is a potential of $1.8 billion that could be lost to transportation.

• The big driver for the State Motor License Fund is the gasoline tax. Act 89 increases were implemented periodically over several years. The cap was reached in terms of the maximum percentage of allowable tax. As more people purchase hybrid or electric vehicles, there is a potential $4.9 billion risk over the course of the 12-Year Program that could be lost due to fleet conversion. Funding would need to be replaced with general funds.

Taking all these factors combined over the course of the 12-Year Program that runs through FFY 2029-30, there is a potential of $18.5 billion at risk. The 12-Year Program now contains a lot of projects that are being counted on. If any of these risks are realized, it will affect our ability to implement the projects, not only future projects but also those projects we already committed to implement based on available resources. Of that $18.5 billion, $6 billion is federal funding and $6.7 billion is Pennsylvania Motor License Fund targeted for highways and bridges and $5.8 billion is directly related to public transit and multi-modal programs.

It was explained that $6 billion could fully reconstruct half of the Pennsylvania Interstate System or 6,000 miles of low volume roads. On the transit side, $5.8 billion would cover five years of funding for all public transportation state of good repairs or would be equal to 11,600 buses. Looking at the Pennsylvania Motor License Fund, $6.7 billion could build another 1,675 bridges.

Deferred maintenance will incur greater cost when replacement is required later. The result will be poor quality roads, more bridges with weight restrictions or closed. Transit projects will need to be deferred or cancelled, and reductions of service may be required. Potential reductions to the Multi-Modal Fund will impact bicycle and trail funding. Public safety will be at risk, as well.
There is ongoing negotiation involving all these issues. There may be increases coming out of the Highway Trust Fund Legislation. The Pennsylvania gasoline tax might be revisited in the future. Every area of the budget is feeling the pressure. Dollars will be moved around. Unless more resources are found, the same issues will be revealed.

Mr. Piper noted that Deputy Secretary Granger (Multi-Modal) sent out information yesterday. Mr. Kilmer said that certain transit capital projects would not be funded in the coming year and the operating budget for SCTA is flat for next year. Mr. Ritzman asked what happens if these things are not resolved? Mr. Kilmer said these things are already happening and are not resolved. Mr. Ritzman agreed that the issues are not resolved yet. You need to stop things now if you know the funding is not there. Mr. Ritzman said this is tied to the PA Turnpike not giving PennDOT the $450 million owed for the fiscal year. Mr. Kilmer said they (SCTA) have no projects on the list because they are currently between projects. There is no funding and will not be any in the future. His concern is they might have federal money but no state money to match the federal money. There is a time limit to spend the federal money. If it is obligated for a certain amount of time and is not used, it goes back. Mr. Ritzman said there is traction on raising the awareness regarding these issues.

Mr. Kilmer said that, nationally, the US Chamber of Commerce is putting together a proposal for a $.5 a year gasoline tax increase over a five-year period. Nothing will be done at the federal or state levels without new revenue. When Act 89 was created, the need was $5 billion. Act 89 only created $2 billion. Now the shortfall is $5.2 billion.

Mr. Piper sits on the PennDOT Financial Guidance Work Group. They are looking at formulas that are used to allocate the dollars that become available for MPO’s to put together the next TIP and Long-Range Transportation Plan. He said the move is going to look at ways to shift more money into the Interstate Program. If more money is put into the Interstate Program, it will be taken away from another areas. We need to keep this in mind moving through this process. We need to use project examples to convince the powers that be that we do need revenue to keep things moving.

As we move closer, we should have a clearer idea of exactly what the impacts on the Financial Guidance will be. This will be discussed more at the May meeting.

Mr. Rudderow said that this discussion helps with understanding of the challenges the Department faces regarding the projects we have. He hopes the elected officials that are in positions to help decide state and federal budgets truly do understand these challenges because infrastructure is crumbling around us. Where is the money going and why is it not put on basic needs of the Commonwealth and other states?

Mr. Ritzman said that we need to pay attention because there may be things down the road that happen to us that we should not be surprised by. Mr. Rudderow said this is quite a challenge and we don’t know what we are going to get. We are planning on a hope. Mr. Ritzman said it could be looked at a couple of different ways. It is assumed the federal funding will be flat. There could be more in the 2021 program if
legislation is passed. Mr. Piper said that we have always been fiscally conservative as programs are put together. If there were legislative allocations that increased, they were included in the assumptions. Whenever it got to the end of whatever the legislative period was, it was flatlined from there on. The last time the TIP and the Long-Range Transportation Plan was updated, the ACT 89 dollars were ratcheted up. We are now at the top of the state funding and is starting to float back down.

- **KEYSTONE CONNECTED: INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SUCCESS FACTORS**

Mr. Piper stated that this is a re-evaluation of a report originally prepared in 2001. It shows the current context for inter-city passenger rail corridors in Pennsylvania. It then investigates, at the national level: what things are happening in other areas; how passenger rail service is being funded in areas where service does work; and what it takes to run passenger rail service.

The existing inter-city passenger rail service lines in Pennsylvania are located on the Northeast Corridor, a line from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, Harrisburg to Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh to Cleveland all provided through Amtrak. Additional possible lines that were looked at are: Reading/Pottstown to Philadelphia; Harrisburg through Lehigh Valley to New York; Allentown to New York; Scranton to New York; and, Pittsburgh to Erie. The re-evaluation looked at these rail service corridors in terms of their “potential to be feasible”. It also said that the Reading/Pottstown to Philadelphia corridor appears to have the most potential in comparison to any of the other corridors examined in the study. Mr. Piper noted that the report warned “that potential does not constitute any indication that the corridor is feasible, simply that it appears to have relatively greater potential among the currently unserved corridors that were compared to the success factors.”

Mr. Rudderow said that there are a lot of cities around the country that have a mixture of forms of transportation that make visiting those cities a pleasure. There seems to be a continued interest in passenger rail to Philadelphia. There is an uncertainty of funding. It is not because of a lack of vision in trying to do that. We are engaging in trying to create a vision to help Berks County grow in a different way. Transportation is a huge part of this both economically and getting people in and out of the county.

8. **UPDATE ON FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL IMPLEMENTATION**

Mr. Piper said the Freeway Service Patrol was initiated in March 4, 2019. There are also new close-circuit cameras that have been added to 511 PA. They are running and available now. He has not received feedback from anybody that has used the Freeway Service Patrol yet. There have been no major traffic jams on the bypasses since then. Commissioner Barnhardt said that over the first 4 days of the service, there were 5 calls into 911Center. Mr. Piper said the trucks should drive through the corridors every 15 minutes.
9. **BCPC UPDATE ON BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Golembiewski stated that, since the January meeting, there were two surveys that have been distributed. One was to municipalities. Only half of them completed it. The big takeaway is that we, as a planning staff, have a lot of work to do with our local governments in getting them to prioritize bicycle/pedestrian improvements in their planning documents. Only half of the municipalities recognized bicycle/pedestrian improvements in their Comprehensive Plan. Fewer still recognized it in their zoning and subdivision ordinances. As far as official mapping and capital project programming in budgeting, the bicycle/pedestrian improvements are non-existent. These issues will be discussed and talked about in the plan.

A public survey was also distributed. About 520 people completed it. Ms. Hain did a great job compiling the survey data, particularly the open-end comments. People in this county would like to see marked bicycle lanes and bicycle routes, improvements to and more connections to the Schuylkill River Trail, better access and maintained access to cross the Schuylkill River. They want sidewalk connections to BARTA routes, especially in the city where the sidewalks are old and broken. These improvements will be discussed and talked about in the plan.

Mr. Golembiewski said that the committee meeting was held last Monday. The next meeting will be held in May. A Gap analysis will be started regarding the trail system, sidewalk systems, where do people live and where are they trying to go.

Mr. Golembiewski said the goal is to have the plan in front of this board to go out for public review in November 2019 with adoption in January 2020.

10. **COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE**

Mr. Boyer stated that the CMAQ funding given to Commuter Services mandates that they try to take cars off the road and clean up the air quality. There is a new statistical gathering device that Commuter Services put in place a year ago. The Commute PA Program is where people are physically doing the charting of traveling with one another than driving alone. The statistics in the report are showing the first year of those numbers. This is unique to what has been done in the past years. Previously, a sample of people was taken within the system. It verified what people were doing in their self-reporting. These numbers are hard and factual but does not show the full scope of everyone in the 13 county area (1.3 million people) who are or could be participating in the program. From a Performance Measuring standpoint, this must be done to show progress in vehicle miles traveled (vmt) reductions and improvements in air quality emissions.

Mr. Boyer mentioned the “Best Work Places for Commuters Program”. It is a stringent program where employers in our region get recognition on a national level on things they do for commuters. One is the Doubletree Hotel in the City of Reading. About 70% of their workers either bike or walk to work. They will be recognized this week with a press release as one of the additional members for the “Best Work Places for Commuters Program” commuter status.
11. OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. Piper stated that this past Tuesday night was the Public Plans Display meeting for the intersection improvement at Rts. 12/73. PennDOT is working on putting improvement plans together. It will not be a roundabout, but a signalized intersection with turn lanes.

- There will be another Public Plans Display meeting next Monday night before the Reading City Council meeting. It is for a betterment project on Chestnut Street that extends from 4th Street to Orange Street.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 2:41 PM.

Date: 5/16/19

[Signature]
Alan D. Piper