ATTENDANCE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
Christopher Kufro PennDOT 5-0, Chair*
Gene Porochniak, PennDOT Central
Alan D. Piper, Berks County Planning Commission
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Jeff Glisson for Dave Kilmer, SCTA/BARTA
Ralph E. Johnson, City of Reading

*Tie-breaking Vote only

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING
Terry Sroka, Reading Regional Airport
Tim Krall, City of Reading

OTHERS
Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0 (Phone)
Jen Ruth, PennDOT 5-0 (Phone)
Earl Armitage, PennDOT
Shannon Rossman, Berks County Planning Commission
Regina Zdradzinski, Berks County Planning Commission
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Laura Mursch, Berks County Planning Commission
Donna Reed, City of Reading
Gail Landis, GRCA
Craig Lutz, Senator Argall
Christopher Spohn, Hamburg Area School District
Jake Meyer, Bethel Township
Paul Archibald, McCormick Taylor, Inc.
Tim Benner, McTish, Kunkel & Associates
Brad Newhard, McTish, Kunkel & Associates
Max Inkrote, Larson Design Group

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kufro called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.
2. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2019**

Chairman Kufro asked if there were any questions or comments to the March 7, 2019 Technical Committee Meeting minutes.

Mr. Porocniak mentioned that Ms. Ruth was listed as PennDOT Central instead of PennDOT 5-0.

**MOTION:** Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to accept the minutes, as changed, and recommended their approval. Mr. Glisson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. **BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

There was no business from the floor.

4. **PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2019-2022 TIP**


**Amendments:** There was one (1) Amendment to increase funding for the US 222/73 and Genesis Drive project utility work and final adjustments prior to bidding.

**Administrative Actions:** There were six (6) Administrative Actions. These all reallocated funds within existing projects based on needs.

**Statewide Administrative Actions:** There was one (1) Statewide Administrative Action that assigned additional state funds to the I-78 pavement restoration project.

Mr. Piper asked if the two bridge actions in Administrative Action #5 (the SR 4040 Northkill Creek and the SR 4040 Bridge Rehabilitation Bundle projects) are going to combined. Chairman Kufro said that the projects would be separate. The Northkill Creek Bridge is a full replacement and the bundle project is rehabilitation of multiple bridges. Mr. Piper said the schedules need to be coordinated since they are all in the same area.

**MOTION:** Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval of the Amendment to the Coordinating Committee. Mr. Glisson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. **REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON PENNSYLVANIA PERFORMANCE-BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING WRITTEN PROVISIONS**

Mr. Piper stated that, as the Performance-based Planning Standards were implemented, we were accepting the standards over the last few years as those particular programs and
Performance Measures came online. Now PennDOT is looking to do one consolidated program for all of the highway and bridge related measures in one action. They are asking the MPO to signify concurrence to go along with the written procedures for performance measures.

Mr. Glisson said that the transit measures are a separate action. He said there is an annual action that must be done before October.

Mr. Piper said this takes the three different measures that were approved in the past and consolidated into one document. Mr. Porochniak clarified that this is in addition to those target sending letters. This is for the over-arching provisions and the procedures to be used to calculate and monitor those measures and targets. The next time the safety targets are done, they will still have to come through as another agreement to continue following the updated targets. This is the same with PM2 and PM3 as we move forward through the cycles.

MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to send the written provisions to the Coordinating Committee for review and approval. Mr. Porochniak seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF ANNUAL LIST OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS – FFY 2018

Mr. Piper stated that this is a federal requirement that has been followed for the past ten years. At the end of a federal fiscal year, we are required to publish a list of projects that federal funds were obligated for during that year. The information has traditionally been presented in a spreadsheet format. As a part of the Federal Planning Certification Review for the last TIP, there was a recommendation that just publishing the spreadsheet was no longer an acceptable way to show this information. While the requirements were being met, the list was to be published so that the public could read and easily understand it. Following provisions given by FHWA, a new document was created that explains the process of how federal funds are programmed showing what the funds are and explaining how they have been assigned (obligated) to projects. It also shows funding over the years by total obligation and what funding is being obligated, what money is going to each project phase, maps that show which projects received funding within that calendar year, and a table that is similar to the other table with better narratives of the project.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if it would be worth adding a statement signifying that, since the state has a separate Interstate TIP, those projects are not show on this list. The public might not know why those projects are omitted from the map. Mr. Piper said a statement can be added.

7. PENNDOT UPDATE ON US 422 WEST SHORE BYPASS RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. Earl Armitage, consultant project manager for PennDOT for the 422 West Shore Bypass Reconstruction, said that this same presentation will be given to the Coordinating Committee in two weeks. There have recently been changes and updates to the preliminary plans presented last year that will be addressed.
Mr. Benner, from McTish Kunkel and Associates, began the presentation by saying that the West Shore Bypass construction project goes from US 222/422/Rt.12 to I-176, which is 5.3 miles. The bypass will be widened from 4 to 6 lanes for that entire route. This includes the construction of four interchanges, which are N. Wyomissing, Penn Avenue, Lancaster Avenue, and I-176. N. Wyomissing and I-176 interchanges will be reconstructed with generally the same configuration as they are now, but just wider to accommodate the six lanes.

There are approximately 80,000 cars a day that travel that bypass. Most of the traffic flows between Rt. 12 and Lancaster Avenue. It drops off to 55,000 car a day traveling east of Lancaster Avenue.

Mr. Benner said there are 21 bridges included in this project, which includes two overhead railroad bridges (the bridge over the Tulpehocken Creek and US 422 and the double track bridge over the Schuylkill River and US 422) and 19 other structures within this corridor.

There are 19 retaining walls proposed, which equals approximately three miles of wall.

There is a potential for five sound walls, which is also approximately three miles. They will be in the residential area along the corridor. This is the area that meets the criteria for sound walls. This area includes Schlegel Park, 18th Ward, a trail area and another residential area.

There are 16 utility owners in this area and 149 conflict points have been identified. Met-Ed and the City of Reading are big players regarding this issue. All these bridges carry heavy loads of utilities. At the same time, two lanes of traffic will always be kept open on the bypass during construction.

The project is still in the Preliminary Engineering phase and will try to get to environmental clearance by next fall (2020). The earliest estimated schedule for construction to start is in 2024.

Mr. Benner stated that the project could be broken down into four separate contracts. They are: 1) Railroad work; 2) Rts. 222/12 past Penn Street exit; 3) Lancaster Avenue interchange; and, 4) Lancaster Avenue to I-176. Each of these contracts would cost between $70 million and $250 million each. No final determination on this breakout has been made at this time.

Ms. Reed said that since this is not set in stone, many are hoping that the interchange at N. Wyomissing Boulevard could include a new bridge into the city rather than simply being a reconstruction of the interchange. A bridge across the Schuylkill River would be critical to the city and well as West Reading and Wyomissing Boroughs. Chairman Kufro said PennDOT is moving forward on the bypass design without this project. The addition of the bridge would have to be a separate project.

Ms. Reed said the City of Reading will keep lobbying for this project. Mr. Johnson asked what it would take to get this bridge incorporated into this project. Mr. Piper stated that this project would need to be paid for with regional funds. The bridge itself is estimate at roughly
$25-$30 million. Mr. Piper said that we first need to find the funding. A regional commitment would be needed to move forward with the project by getting it included as part of the TIP. Do we try to incorporate the bridge into this project or put the bridge on its own track and incorporate it as an element during construction? Just saying the bridge would be good for economic development isn’t enough. A purpose and need report and a definition is needed for the possible bridge project. Ms. Reed asked what the first steps are to do this. Mr. Piper said he will provide her with the information regarding this process.

Mr. Benner said that the major waterways involved are the Schuylkill River, Tulpehocken Creek, Wyomissing Creek and five perennial/ephemeral intermittent waterways. From detailed studies from these major waterways, we cannot raise 100-year flood elevations at all through this process.

Four acres of wetlands have been identified in the project area. Within the urban corridor, there are two large wetlands. One is located between Penn Avenue and Lancaster Avenue on the river side and the second one is on the east end of the project at the Schuylkill River Desilting Basin.

Mr. Benner stated that there are three endangered species: Red Bellied Turtle, Bog Turtles and Cobweb Skippers (moth). Two new bats were identified and will be added to the list with the potential for a plant species, as well.

In the urban corridor, 67 Phase 1 ESA’s (Environmental Site Assessments) have been done. Twenty-three sites will move to Phase 2 and Phase 3. There are two locations of coal ash deposits that were found under US 422. Under one location there were 23 feet of coal ash underneath the road and the other site was about 28 feet of coal ash east of Lancaster Avenue. Mr. Golembiewski asked if that can be built over or would different measures need to be taken. Mr. Benner said the road is working well. He sees no reason to remove the coal ash.

Mr. Piper questioned Mr. Johnson about the status of the dam on the Tulpehocken Creek. Mr. Johnson said the City of Reading expects to remove the dam.

Mr. Johnson said the actual interchange underneath the bridge at Lancaster Avenue is part of the floodplain because of the drainage. Was this area checked for a floodplain? Mr. Benner said he doesn’t know if it is in a floodplain, but it is the low point of that entire area. It would make sense that the flood waters would back up through the storm system and flood that area. Mr. Johnson said that is what happens and that floods early when there is a major flood event. He thinks this would be part of the flood plain by elevation and the connection with the piping system.

A preliminary air study was performed, and we are in compliance with federal regulations. A preliminary noise study was performed, and 16,000 feet of feasible sound wall was identified. It does not mean they will all be built. It is the starting point.

A lot of impervious areas are being added right next to the river. Developed areas are located on the other side of the river. There is not a lot of area to build stormwater management
facilities, but they are still working out these designs. Mr. Benner went to the Agency Coordination Meeting in Harrisburg, which is a meeting with state and federal agencies, to introduce them to the project.

There were 36 above-ground historical resources and nine are eligible for the National Register. Archaeology was completed last year. Evaluation and documentation is being done. Seven pre-contact sites and three historical sites have been identified in this area. One pre-contact site is eligible for the National Register. There are 16 4(f) resources found in the project area.

Mr. Benner said that the Schuylkill River, Thun Trail, the Lancaster Avenue area will all be impacted. The Exeter Scenic Trail that is located at the east end of the project and goes under US 422 will not be impacted but the bridge will be re-built above it. Schlegel Park and the Philadelphia and Reading Railroads (now operated by Norfolk Southern) will be impacted. Buttonwood Street, Penn Street, Schuylkill River Desilting Basin located at the east end of the project will all be impacted.

The project designers have been attending Bicycle/Pedestrian and GRCA meetings to identify community priorities and potential mitigation.

The plan for this year (2019) is to update the visualization video due to the many changes. A second public meeting will be scheduled in the fall. Point of Access Studies were approved last year for the Penn Avenue and Lancaster Avenue Interchanges. Line and Grade submissions were submitted and are in Harrisburg now. The first core-boring contracts were done at night. Lab testing should be returned within the next month. There will be a second core-boring contract coming out later this summer.

Hydrologic & Hydraulics and preliminary bridge design go hand in hand. Type, Size & Location reports will be submitted for the 21 structures. Generally, 2 structures a month are being submitted. Preliminary ROW, Utility and Railroad coordination is ongoing. ROW is tied very closely to the Stormwater Management designs.

Mr. Piper asked Mr. Benner if only the two Points of Access (POA) approvals are needed because the interchange configurations are changing. Mr. Benner said the POA is needed for the other two as well. The Point of Access Study was for all four interchanges.

The Norfolk Southern Bridge is a double track bridge over US. 422 and lies between N. Wyomissing Boulevard and Penn Avenue Interchanges. Norfolk Southern does not want either of those tracks taken out of service at any time during construction. A new double-track structure would need to be built offline. The structure, while significant, is not the main issue; it is the relocated trackwork off the end of that new structure. New trackwork would need to be run for up to a mile on each side. This would have major impacts in Reading, West Reading and Wyomissing. A concept was submitted to Norfolk Southern to get the six lanes underneath their bridge while leaving the current bridge in place. We will put our six lanes in and keep the bridge intact. It will involve narrow shoulders along 422. A wall will need to be installed in front of the existing abutment. A new bridge would be approximately 1,200 feet long and cost
approximately $30 million, and that does not include the track work and related ROW acquisition.

The 100 Year Flood Plain inundates US 422 at Buttonwood Street. There is limited vertical clearance. Once you try to put three lanes through there, the arches come into play. If the bridge is kept in place to get three lanes, the road would need to be lowered about 4 feet. It would be lowering the road an additional 4 feet below flood elevation. So, the end three spans of the Buttonwood Street Bridge will need to be reconstructed. The arches will be eliminated and put straight concrete girders across. That way the road can stay where it is, the flooding condition will not get any worse and the designer will get the vertical clearance for the three lanes through there. Mr. Johnson asked if the flood risk is the same now that Blue Marsh dam is there. Has this been taken into account for the flood risk? FEMA maps have been updated. Mr. Golembiewski said that in 2006, Blue Marsh Dam was emergency spilling for the first time ever and that area was under water. Mr. Benner said that there will still be a flood problem in that area. It will not be any worse. Mr. Piper asked if the Buttonwood Street Bridge will need to be closed while under construction. Mr. Benner said yes. Mr. Lutz asked how much was just spend on that bridge. Mr. Piper said about $14 million. State and county funds were used to fund that project. Mr. Johnson asked if there is any way to reduce the beam height and bring the road up 2-3 feet. Mr. Benner said that Buttonwood Street carries gas, water and telecommunication lines. The road might be able to be raised 11-12 inches but will not reach 3 feet. He said that the Buttonwood Street Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places. If it is reconstructed, the work needs to be minimized and mitigated. It needs to be reconstructed as close to possible as it is now.

Mr. Benner said that the First Avenue Bridge in West Reading was initially going to be closed off with walls. Now the bridge will be replaced there. It maintains access to the riverfront area, and keeps the RACC Bridge, Thun Trail and the Bertolet Fishing Dock in place. The Thun Trail Pedestrian Bridge at Lancaster Avenue will be relocated and built over the new Lancaster Avenue Bridge interchange. Lanes will be built from the trail down to the sidewalks to maintain access.

8. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Golembiewski gave an update because Mr. Boyer was not able to be present for the meeting.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that May is Bike Month, also known as Motorless May. This takes into account all modes of transportation. Through the Commute PA app, people can log in their trips to win prizes in order to encourage participation.

Bike to Work Week is the third week of the month. Bike to Work Day is May 17th. There will be no formal bicycle ride in Berks County this year. Commuter Services will work with Tower Health and other partners to come up with another activity in late summer or early fall.
9. **PENNDOT UPDATE ON BRIDGE PROJECTS**

Chairman Kufro gave an update on the Bridge Projects.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS**

   - Mr. Johnson asked if the Technical Committee has a mission statement. Is their mission defined by the state? Mr. Piper said that our mission is to provide a filter to the Coordinating Committee in terms of implementing all the federal regulations and addressing the technical issues that are related to the projects that go through the TIP.

   Mr. Johnson asked if we have bylaws. Mr. Piper said yes and that he should have been given a copy of them. He said he will resend a copy of them to Mr. Johnson. Chairman Kufro asked how often the bylaws are updated. Mr. Piper said it is time to update them again.

   - Mr. Porochniak thanked Chairman Kufro for the acronym sheet that was attached to the Bridge Status Report.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

    **MOTION:** Mr. Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:40 PM. Mr. Glisson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

    **Date:** 7/18/19

    [Signature]

    Alan D. Piper