

READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 7, 2019 AT  
THE BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM ON THE  
FOURTEENTH FLOOR OF THE BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER

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  
Tim Krall, City of Reading

\*Tie-breaking Vote only

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Terry Sroka, Reading Regional Airport

OTHERS

Andrea Ebur, FHWA  
Jen Ruth, PennDOT 5-0  
Regina Zdradzinski, Berks County Planning Commission  
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission  
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission  
Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission  
Craig Lutz, Senator Argall  
Heather Winters, Rep. Caltagirone  
Josh Fidler, Congressman Meuser  
Matt Boyer, Commuter Services  
Debra Millman, GRCA  
Christopher Spohn, Hamburg Area School District  
Joe Romano, Larson Design Group  
John Caperilla, Cedarville Engineering Group  
Holly Herman, Reading Eagle

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kufro called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION OF JOINT TECHNICAL AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Mr. Piper said action on these minutes has been deferred since they are not yet complete.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2019

Mr. Kufro asked if there were any questions or comments to the October 3, 2019 Technical Committee minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to accept the minutes and recommended their approval. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Lutz said that the Greenwich Township supervisors understand that PennDOT wants to temporarily close three of five underpasses for the I-78 Reconstruction project. He is hoping that Long Lane would remain open so that all traffic is not pushed onto their (township) roads. Chairman Kufro said there are no full closures on I-78. If there are any type of closures, they will be short, at night and in 15 minute intervals. Mr. Lutz asked if Long Lane would be able to be used constantly or if traffic is going to be diverted. Chairman Kufro asked if the supervisors are worried about the roadway detoured below those bridges. Mr. Lutz said yes. Chairman Kufro said he will look at this situation and get back to Mr. Lutz.

5. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON 2020 MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Piper distributed to proposed meeting schedule for 2020. The Technical Committee meeting is held the first Thursday of the month and the Coordinating Committee meeting is held the third Thursday of every other month.

There are three exceptions for the Technical Committee. Instead of meeting on January 2, 2020, it was moved to January 9, 2020. Instead of meeting on July 2, 2020, the meeting was moved to July 9, 2020. In September, we will once again have a joint meeting with the Coordinating Committee at the Reading Regional Airport on September 17, 2020.

MOTION: Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve recommendation and send it to Coordinating Committee for approval. Mr. Glisson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Ruth gave an update on Amendments/Modifications to FFY 2019-2022 Highway TIP from September 27, 2019 through November 1, 2019.

Amendments: There was one (1) Amendment adding federal funds for Right-of-Way to the SR 2023 (Carsonia Avenue) Bridge project in Lower Alsace Township.

Administrative Actions: There were six (6) Administrative Actions. Each of these reallocated funding within existing projects based on need and schedule adjustments.

Statewide Administrative Actions: There were three (3) Statewide Administrative Actions. The first of these added Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) Funding for projects in Amity, Exeter and Muhlenberg Townships. The second added Multi-modal Transportation Funds for an intersection project on SR 10 at Shiloh Road in Caernarvon Township. The third added Green Light Go Funding for traffic signal improvements in the Borough of Wyomissing.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to forward recommendation to the Coordinating Committee for approval. Mr. Porochniak seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. CONTINUING DISCUSSION ON PROJECT PRIORITIES FOR DRAFT FFY 2021-2024 TIP

Mr. Piper said that he has been meeting with PennDOT's Central and District Office staff members over the last month. To date, there have been six working sessions. The project priority list is not completed yet but will be used for discussion purposes today.

Mr. Piper said the one major requirement was fulfilled. Each of the first eight years of the program are balanced as a group with funds assigned by year and by funding project class. We had to try to make these projects fit into the budget. Just within the first 4 years, we needed to figure out how to move \$68 million worth of projects out of the program based in the new funding allocation.

Mr. Piper started to explain some of the highlights of the actions made to date and the tough decisions coming up.

In prior years, a portion of CMAQ money that represented about 20% of our annual allocation was flexed to BARTA for bus purchases. Based on funding cuts, we agreed to leave the first two years go, as programmed, at \$900,000 per year. From FFY 2023 out, annual funding was cut in half to \$450,000 per year.

For another area using CMAQ funding, we flatlined the annual Commuter Services allocation at the 2020 funding level. We fixed it at \$275,000 and carried that across the board. CMAQ funding for Commuter Services had been increasing at 1% per year.

Two additional bridge preservation project line items were added to ease deferring bridge projects. They were spread over the first 5-6 years. Bridge bundles were added for deck overlays and repairs/replacements of box culverts.

We needed to show annual funding for the Freeway Service Patrol Program. For now, we have it in at the current amount which increases with the PennDOT Year of Expenditure rate of 3% per year across the program.

The safety project on Rt. 12 & Elizabeth Avenue is still on the program. This is the highest ranked project in that corridor. Rt. 12 & Alsace Manor is being looked at as well. Projects identified on Rt. 61 from Zion's Church Road to the Schuylkill County line, not including the interchange with I-78, which is funded from the Interstate Program, were cut apart and put back together in different ways, sliding schedules around and looking for ways to downsize the projects in order to still meet the need. Rehabilitation to the large bridge over the Schuylkill River is still being done. It is not the full scope. This \$14-\$15 million Rehabilitation project has been reduced to a \$6 million Preventative Maintenance project.

The US 222 Corridor project in Maidencreek Township is under construction and will be completed. The next priority in the US 222 Corridor is the 222/Long Lane intersection. It is the last of the major choke points along that corridor. The next project would have extended the widening to four lanes from where the current project in Maidencreek ends north of Schaeffer Road through to the Kutztown Bypass. There is not enough money in the program to incorporate this as one project. The segment was broken up into three separate pieces. The first segment would be a small extension that goes from Rt. 662 south that includes an additional roundabout at Richmond Road and will start Final Design in FFY 2025 and construction outside of the current 8-year period.

Mr. Piper said that the design for the next phase will be closing the gap between SR 662 north to the Kutztown Bypass, which includes the rehabilitation of the bridge over Willow Creek. The final phase would run from Richmond Road south to the current construction at Schaeffer Lane. Money is included in here way out in 2029 to refresh the Preliminary Engineering to restart the project again and hope to continue to construction.

A segment that was supposed to start in Design 2022 was the Preliminary Engineering for the last piece of the US 222 Corridor that goes from the Kutztown Bypass to the Lehigh County line. Preliminary Engineering now will only start in 2029 or later. Funding may not be available to move forward with this project.

#### Urban Area:

#### Reconstruction of US 222 SB/US 422 WB ramp

This project would extend the recently constructed auxiliary lane between Broadcasting Road to the 222 South exit. It would begin addressing the bottleneck that exists at that point where US 422 westbound merges with 222 southbound and goes up onto the Warren Street Bypass in front of the Berkshire Mall. The design of this project will continue but we do not anticipate having the funding to start the construction until FFY 2025. The project has been modified to also look at the northbound 222 ramp traffic, as well. There are merging issues between State Hill Road, Crossing Drive and the ramp to go to 222 South.

There is currently one major rehabilitation project located on the Warren Street Bypass. It would have looked at rehabilitating the Warren Street Bypass pavement from the Tulpehocken Creek, in front of the Berkshire Mall, and on 222 south as far as ¼ mile south of Penn Avenue. This would include rehabilitating all the ramps leading into and out of the West Lawn area. This project was broken into two separate projects. The initial phase will focus on rehabilitating the western and southern end of the project. The oldest pavement on US 222 and the ramps that go in and out of West Lawn have a \$5 million limit. The balance of that project will be deferred for 3-4 years.

### US 422 Reconstruction Corridor

This project was recently re-scoped by altering the design to eliminate the need of replacing the railroad bridge that crosses into the City of Reading just north of Buttonwood Street. This will reduce the total cost estimate by \$50 million from \$600 million to \$550 million.

This project was originally to be broken up into four or five different phases. The smallest phase would have been \$20 million related to coordination with Norfolk Southern in the area extending from North Wyomissing boulevard and crossing the Tulpehocken Creek. Every other phase in this project was a multi-hundred-million-dollar project.

The other issue is there has been \$6.5 million spent on Preliminary Engineering already. If some phase of the project is not started within a 10-year period, we could be required to pay back any federal money already spent. In an effort to not have to pay for something twice, PennDOT has proposed breaking out one bridge, which was determined to be the one located to the west of I-176 where it merges into the West Shore Bypass. We need to find a way to front load this project into the TIP. This is the only period where there are sufficient dollars available in the first four years of the program. It was decided to continue with the Preliminary Engineering for the entire corridor and use the Design Build process for the bridge. Under this process, the project is let and the contractor is responsible for teaming with an engineer who is responsible for completing the Final Design and performing the pre-construction activities. The project moves into construction once all of these activities are approved.

The project was front-loaded into FFY 2021-2022. In order to make this project work, it still needed to be cash-flowed out over six full years in order to fit this one piece of the corridor project into the budget. There is also \$4 million-\$5million proposed to be used for bridge preservation on the balance of the bridges carrying US 422 from Penn Avenue to just east of I-176. Chairman Kufro said there is six years spread out for that one major river crossing, which includes Final Design and ROW. It is a process that takes time. Mr. Golembiewski asked if the project will actually be under construction for six years since constructing funding is showing for six years. Chairman Kufro said no. It was put in the budget to capture the construction dollars. Chairman Kufro said this bridge needed to be replaced and widened which made it a good place to start. Mr. Piper said that, out of that entire corridor project, that is the only phase that has been programmed.

Mr. Lutz asked how much of the Preliminary Engineering will be viable when we ultimately get to construction of other phases. Mr. Piper said that we have funding programmed to go back and refresh the data. The goal now is to get environmental approval for the entire corridor. If we

receive additional resources within this 8-year period, we have an approved environmental document to break out projects and move forward with Final Design and ROW. Mr. Krall asked if there is any way to advance ROW on any of these corridors to lock up the land. Mr. Piper said no. Right-of-Way cannot be acquired without an approved Final Design.

Mr. Piper said the balance of the draft TIP is primarily bridge maintenance & replacement projects. We tried to hold the schedule for the smaller bridges that were on the prior TIP. There were projects on the Long-Range Transportation Program (LRTP) that were proposed to be carried over. We looked at these projects and did triage on them by looking at the networks they are on and decided that some of the lower volume bridges had to be pushed farther out in the program. Chairman Kufro said that each bridge was looked at by the engineers to ensure their safe operations. Where reconstruction needed to be deferred, these bridges were included in a Preventative Maintenance project.

The list still shows some carry-over local bridge projects from the last program that we do not have funding for. They will be looked at again as we finalize this process to see if some can be pulled into this program based on the dollars that are still available in the out years or to be placed in the Long-Range Plan. Mr. Lutz asked about the Dwight Street Bridge in Spring Township. Mr. Piper said that bridge is already on the LRTP list.

Mr. Piper said that in the last TIP we included removing a number of closed bridges in Berks County. Part of the criteria we were judged on at that time was the number of bridges closed in an area. That criteria is no longer in effect. Based on the current budget issue, it is difficult to justify spending money on removing something that is not being used now when there are projects on open roads that we need to find funds to fix. For now, any of the closed bridges that were talked about removing will remain closed in place.

Mr. Piper said that we are required to make a submission to PennDOT by December 31, 2019 for their initial review. Once preliminary approval of the project list is obtained, we need to put together the required draft documentation that goes with the submission. All of this material will come back for approval in May 2020. It will then go out for a public review and comment period. Final approval by the board is required in July 2020. Enactment by the state and federal government is required by October 1, 2020.

Mr. Golembiewski asked about the CMAQ items in 2023. There was nothing shown for BARTA or Commuter Services. It was then doubled up in 2024. Does this mean that BARTA and Commuter Services will not receive any funding in 2023 or is this just a balancing act? Chairman Kufro said that it is intended to be equal those two years and is just a balancing action at this time. We are not done tweaking the funding. Mr. Piper said we can take Administrative Actions to bridge this gap, if necessary. In these two particular cases, we tried to make sure that gap occurs within the same TIP period. When the funds are available, we have the ability to move an approved project back and forth within that period, as necessary. Mr. Porochniak said that for the full 12 years, the program must be fiscally balanced. This is an action to make sure the program is balanced for now.

Mr. Krall asked if the dollars shown for the SR 12 Resurfacing project is the full cost. Mr. Piper said no because the project will be going to construction in 2020. Most of this project is funded off the current TIP. This is just the portion that needs to be carried over. Nothing has changed.

Mr. Piper said that this is the most difficult TIP update he ever had to deal with. He said it is much easier to add projects to a program, but it is never easy to take projects away. This is especially true when dealing with the magnitude of both dollars and projects being dealt with in this year.

Based on the current numbers, Mr. Piper observed that the first two to three years were the fattest years of the TIP. When we reach the second 4-year period and beyond, unless something changes, there is no way to advance any major project based on the projected resources. Chairman Kufro said if things do not change, there will be a lot of preservation and repaving work. He said that the federal FAST Act expires next September with the expectation of being a continuing resolution. There could be a new transportation bill sometime after the election next year.

Mr. Piper said the transit TIP needs to fall in the same schedule as the Highway & Bridge TIP. Mr. Glisson agreed. Mr. Piper asked if he was anticipating having a draft soon. Mr. Glisson said he must still do a draft transit TIP for both Reading and Lancaster. Projects need to be identified. This urbanized area has been supportive of transit by allocating the CMAQ funds. The Capital Improvement Program for buses can withstand this reduction and still continue with its fleet replacement schedule. He wanted to make the legislators aware of the impacts.

Mr. Krall asked if the proposed US 422 Bridge project can be tied into the northbound Interstate ramp. Mr. Piper said that is the goal. The ramp connection will be included but Interstate funding cannot be used for that at this time.

8. UPDATE ON FY 20-21 AND FY 21-22 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Golembiewski stated that this is the contract between the Department and the staff to the MPO for everything we do for the MPO. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is updated every two years.

This time around, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) gave us guidance that requires more coordination among all the players, more detail, and well-defined time lines. We also need to better define what products/programs/projects we will be working on and when those potential products will be completed.

Mr. Golembiewski said that the Technical Committee met after the October Technical Committee meeting. Initial time lines, potential projects and programs that are included were discussed. There is consistency that is required between goals that the State set and issues that came out of the statewide certification review. There are federal planning factors that need to be considered. The standard products we go through on a timely basis, such as TIP and Long-Range

Transportation Plan updates, Air Quality Conformity updates, Title VI and Environmental Justice work were discussed. The periodic projects and programs including Bicycle/Pedestrian planning, Census 2020, Congestion Management Process, and transit issues were incorporated as well.

Time lines were reviewed last month. The projects and program were agreed upon. Mr. Golembiewski said all the projects were laid out under the appropriate tasks, including who would be doing these tasks. What individual staff that would be doing the tasks each year was never included before. The responsibilities of what would be done and when it would be done was laid out. This is a two-year document broken down into two yearly time frames.

This draft UPWP information will be forwarded to the Coordinating Committee this Friday for review. We need a recommendation to forward this to the Coordinating Committee. If they concur, the next step would be for the Coordinating Committee to forward the draft UPWP to the FHWA, in which they have a 45-day review period. PennDOT Central would forward it to the Bureau of Public Transit, who would then forward it to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for their review, as well. After the reviews, we would incorporate any comments that we receive. The MPO will then adopt it at the January 2020 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend forwarding the UPWP to the Coordinating Committee for review. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### 9. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Boyer stated that Commuter Services was involved with the health and wellness fairs going on in the fall for Alcon Industries, Dollar General, PA CareerLink and EDSI Berks. They are using our services as one of their health eligibility benefits.

College Month recently wrapped up. Nine colleges from the thirteen counties went through a competition. There were almost 1,500 trips tracked by the students and faculty at these colleges. That was approximately 7,600 miles not driven as a result of those efforts and \$4,400 in savings based on this promotion.

Mr. Boyer said that this Monthly Activity Report contains statistics based on the results of activities regarding outreach. The data base for October has 22,000 commuters that are enrolled and participate in the Commuter Services Program. From the people who are tracking just for the month of October, there were 16,000 green trips that were tracked (people physically using a non-SOV mode of transportation). Of the tracked trips, it was equivalent to 262,000 miles that were not driven on the roads. That was \$151,000 and a little over 12,000 gallons of gasoline not needed to be purchased due to the efforts of the program. There will be reports provided to the MPO in January based on numbers specific to Berks County for the past year.

#### 10. PENNDOT UPDATE ON BRIDGE PROJECTS

Chairman Kufro gave an update on the bridge projects. Regarding the I-78 Mainline Bridge Widening and SR 61, Mr. Lutz asked is there room to replace the bridge like was done on the US 22 Bridge in Lehigh County. Chairman Kufro said that this work will be tied into the

existing bridge. It will be a symmetrical widening. Chairman Kufro said it is still using the current bridge. The main bridge in the middle will be rehabilitated and symmetrically widened with a full lane and a full shoulder on each side. This is in addition to what is there now.

Mr. Piper said that based on the prior TIP discussion, the schedules for many of these projects are subject to change. Chairman Kufro said some of the projects may be changed to Preventative Maintenance and some may be delayed for a few years.

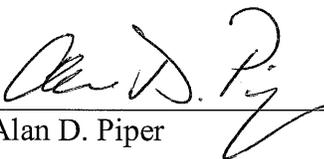
11. OTHER BUSINES

There was no other business.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:38 PM. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Date: 1/9/2020

  
Alan D. Piper