

READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
NOVEMBER 18, 2021

ATTENDANCE

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Michael Rebert, PennDOT 5-0 Chair *
Kristin Mulkerin, PennDOT Program Center
Commissioner Michael Rivera, County of Berks
Donna Reed, City of Reading
Tom McKeon, Berks County Planning Commission
Dave Kilmer/Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt, SCTA/BARTA
Joseph Rudderow, Reading Regional Airport Authority
Stephen Price, Boroughs (Wernersville)

*Tie-breaking Vote only

COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

James Oswald, 2nd Class Townships (Lower Alsace Township)
Vacant, 1st Class Townships

OTHERS

Jen Crobak, FHWA
Chelsea Beytas, FTA
Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0
Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0
David Alas, PennDOT Central
Jim Mosca, PennDOT Central
Michael Donchez, PennDOT 5-0
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0
Alan D. Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
David Hunter, Berks County Planning Commission
Ashley Showers, Berks County Planning Commission
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Regina Zdradzinski, Berks County Planning Commission
Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission
Laura Mursch, Berks County Planning Commission
Greg Downing, SCTA
Matt Boyer, Commuter Services of PA
Lori Schneider, Berks County IS
Heather Berger, Berks County IS
Malcolm Townes, Berks County IS

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Piper took a verbal roll call of the Committee members. Chairman Rebert

then called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

- Mr. Piper stated that we are on the verge of a significant turnover of committee members. Our 1st Class Township representative from Cumru Township was Chip Bilger. He resigned from the Cumru Township Board of Commissioners which creates a vacancy for the 1st Class Township representative.
- Mr. Price said this will be his final meeting as a representative of Boroughs. He will no longer be in office after the beginning of the new year.
- We will be soliciting candidates for a replacement of the 2nd Class Township representative due to lack of attendance and quorum requirements.

Letters went out to each of those groups in October and were given until December 10, 2021 to submit nominations for consideration by the Berks County Board of Commissioners. All three of those municipal seats are appointed by the Berks County Commissioners.

- This will be Mr. David Kilmer's last meeting as Executive Manager of SCTA.
- Mr. Rudderow stated that he is uncertain of his appointment with the Reading Regional Airport Authority. His appointment expires on December 31, 2021. He expressed an interest to serve on the Reading Regional Airport Authority, but it is uncertain if he will be reappointed. If not, then this will be his last meeting on the RATS Coordinating Committee, as well.
- Ms. Reed stated that, when City Council reorganizes, she will ask to sustain her appointment to the RATS Coordinating Committee.

Commissioner Barnhardt asked Mr. Piper if he received a letter from Cumru Township regarding municipal seats. Mr. Piper said no. To date, he has only received one recommendation letter from Boroughs.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

Chairman Rebert asked if there were any questions or comments on the September 16, 2021 Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

MOTION: Mr. Rudderow made a motion to approve the September 16, 2021 Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF 2022 RATS COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Piper stated that the 2022 proposed meeting schedule is similar to the previous meeting schedule in that we will continue meeting virtually for now. This option can be reviewed in the future and possibly changed as necessary. The Technical Committee meetings will still be held the first Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM except for one time this year. The Coordinating Committee will still hold its meetings every third Thursday every other month at 1:00 PM.

PennDOT has requested to combine the November Technical and Coordinating meetings and move them to November 10, 2022 at 1:00 PM due to a statewide conference involving PennDOT.

MOTION: Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to approve the 2022 RATS Committee Meeting Schedule. Mr. Rudderow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2021-2024 TIP

Mr. Donchez gave an update on the Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2021-2024 TIP from August 27, 2021, to October 27, 2021.

- There was one (1) Amendment that deals with adding PE for the Smoketown Road Bridge on SR 1029. It will be demolished and replaced due to heavy rain damage.
- There was a total of fourteen (14) Administrative Actions to balance out project phase schedules with anticipated needs to address AC conversions, supplements, needed right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and balancing for the fiscal year end close out.

MOTION: Mr. Rudderow made a motion to add the Smoketown Road Bridge Preliminary Engineering phase at \$490,000. Mr. Price seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Note: This amendment was later determined to be unnecessary since it only involved state and not federal funding.

6. UPDATE ON FFY 2022-2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW

Mr. Golembiewski stated that the draft UPWP is a 2-year contract with PennDOT for Berks County Planning Commission staff to perform the planning work done in our office on behalf of the MPO.

Two items were discussed. They are:

1. Work we want to perform, where we stood at that time and what we are proposing to do in the future.

2. Streamlining the document itself.

There were concerns from Central Office regarding how invoicing would be done and whether there would be enough documentation in the updated UPWP for that invoicing.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that there was a meeting on October 7, 2021, in place of the Technical Committee meeting. The meeting was made up of representatives from the Technical Committee, Central Office, District 5-0, FTA, and SCTA. The draft UPWP was discussed. Central Office was satisfied that the MPO would be maintaining enough documentation to continue billing the same way as now. York County MPO's billing process was used as an example.

As far as the document itself, FHWA put in new requirements two years ago that they wanted contained within the UPWP. They are: 1) budgeting out by year with more detail. A timeline would be put out of what was going on, what activities were going to be conducted and when they would occur. A listing will be given of what deliverable products would be coming out and who would be undertaking all these activities.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that in the prior UPWP there were nine major work areas with twenty individual tasks. What was done in this document was take 74 pages and combine them into 34 pages. The nine major work areas were combined into five areas. The twenty individual work tasks will be kept. They were re-distributed among the work areas, revised the text, and made it more concise. The MPO is still required to maintain one table for each of the two years contained within the UPWP that would combine all the individual budgets.

The Technical Committee at their meeting on November 4, 2021, made a recommendation to the Coordinating Committee to forward this document to FHWA, FTA and PennDOT for their review. FHWA is asking for a 30-45-day review period, give the board their comments, incorporate these comments before it is formally adopted in January 2022.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to forward the draft UPWP to FHWA, FTA and PennDOT for review prior to the Coordinating Committee formally adopting this in January 2022. Mr. Rudderow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. UPDATE ON RATS PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL FREIGHT PLAN AND APPROVAL TO EXECUTE AGREEMENT

Mr. Piper stated that we have been negotiating with the MPOs from the Lehigh Valley, NEPA region, Lackawanna/Luzerne and Lebanon Counties to put together the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance – Multi-Region Freight Plan that would look at areas in more detail than the statewide plan would be. The proposal was presented to PennDOT, and they approved it. PennDOT granted \$280,000 in state money to be supplemented with \$70,000 in MPO money split based on population among the five MPOs. There is a draft agreement in place. The action today is for this committee to authorize the Berks County Planning

Commission Executive Director, David N. Hunter, Sr., to execute the agreement on behalf of Reading MPO.

Mr. Piper said there is roughly \$13,000 that would be Berks County's share and has already been agreed to in concept by the Berks County Board of Commissioners. A draft scope of work is under development. The plan itself will be administered through the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission as the contracting agent. As products and steps are taken on that, it will be coordinated back through our Coordinating Committee. This plan development will take approximately 18 months. The goal would be to put an RFP on the table in the very near future to begin getting information from potential consultants and then have a consultant on board by spring 2022 to begin the work.

MOTION: Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to authorize the Executive Director, David N. Hunter, Sr., to execute the Regional Freight Plan on behalf of the Reading MPO. Mr. Rudderow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. UPDATE ON FEDERAL FUNDING LEGISLATION

Ms. Mulkerin gave an update on Federal Funding Legislation. She stated that the legislation passed on November 5, 2021 and was signed this week by President Biden. The funding is authorized for five years. About \$351 billion was authorized for highways and bridges and \$107 billion for transit. Out of that \$351 billion, \$1.3 billion is designated for Federal Aid highways and \$1.6 billion is designated for bridge replacement and repairs via formula funding in Pennsylvania. This is not all new funding but some of this continues existing funds within the program for those allocations.

There was a sample list of priority projects from each of the MPOs and RPOs that if this funding would become available, this would be a way to advance or enhance some of the projects. Every region in the state is dealing with financial difficulty and difficult choices. The new funding will enable projects to move forward. These choices will be made on a local level through the TIP development.

It takes a while once legislation passes for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to issue guidance that identifies the allocations per year and provide guidance on how the funding can be used. It is anticipated that the allocations would be issued through similar formulas and guidelines as in the past. There are some newer programs such as Resiliency and EV Charging, that we'll have to wait for the guidelines to understand how they will be funded and how to implement those programs.

PennDOT regrouped with the Financial Guidance Work Group which assists in developing the formulas to allocate funding. There are also new general fund allocations that came through like funding for bridges, and the hope is to leverage existing formulas for some of those other funds. Everyone was in favor to utilize the existing formulas for the standard programs like NHPP, STP and CMAQ. Safety money will be given to each region and extra money will go towards the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program. There is no desire

by PennDOT to increase NHPP funding for the Interstates at this time. All the new NHPP funding would go back to the regions. These are draft numbers and are subject to change. The hope is to have them out to the MPOs and districts within the next week. These are estimates before the final numbers come from FHWA, which hopefully might be before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Rudderow said that a few years ago, the shifting of dollars went to the Interstate Program. With these being new dollars, would these funds put us back on track to get some of the smaller projects completed. Mr. Piper said he hopes so. Depending upon how the new dollars are split up among the various programs, these new funds could return us to the past funding amounts prior to when the funds were moved to the Interstate program.

In the discussion this morning with the Financial Guidance Work Group, the new dollars are not necessarily going back into the specific funding category at the same rates, but there will be more dollars available in the different funding types. Until we receive that allocation, there is no way to tell how close we'll be to prior funding allocations. If the numbers are correct, this is a much more sustainable program than what we had in the current program.

Mr. Rudderow stated that this will help US 422 because it was also a big dollar commitment to the region in looking at the reconstruction work on US 422 around Reading. Hopefully, these additional dollars will get us a little closer to getting these projects funded or moving in the right direction. The US 422 area is still listed as a predominant route for freight carriers. Mr. Piper stated that we have a significant portion of the money for the US 422 Phase 1 project in discretionary spike funding. Deputy Secretary Shifflet made a point in saying that the intent for the spike dollars that were assigned will remain and it is their intention to keep that commitment.

Mr. Rudderow asked if the spike money was separate from the bridge money. Mr. Piper said yes. The spike dollars are separate and is over and above anything in our TIP. The base allocation is for NHPP and STP, and the state dollars can be used for highways or bridges. There is a separate program that is added on top of the Federal Trust Fund package. The General Fund dollars are dedicated for creating a separate and additional bridge program. There will be emphasis in putting bridges back into play. This is an area where we need to wait to see what the guidance is going to tell us what can be done. This could include a couple bridges per year if the dollar amount is correct. Mr. Rudderow asked if that would include removing the Lenhartsville Bridge as a candidate bridge for tolling? Or is this money we can use on other bridges that need attention? Mr. Piper said it is his understanding that the tolling proposal is still in play and the new dollars would be for projects other than that.

Mr. Kilmer stated that the apportionments for transit may increase by 30%. He stated that all this federal money requires a match. State money itself is in flux and needs to be addressed for all of this to work. Ms. Mulkerin said that on the highway and bridge side, there is a 20% state match. Approximately \$1 billion additional would be needed statewide to fully leverage the federal side.

Mr. Piper stated that it is assumed that the allocations would grow based on the same ratio and same formula used in the past.

Mr. Rudderow stated that, in the past, there were elected officials who sent representatives to our meetings. How do we convey the importance of those state dollars to those elected officials in order to maximize the use of the federal money? How do we make them aware that the state budget is going to be allocating dollars for the transportation making the state dollars more important than ever? Mr. Piper said that the board would have to make that decision to recommend staff draft a letter in that regard. Technically, we do not have the authority to be lobbyists, but we can be informers to address an issue. Mr. Rudderow said if the MPO wants to have a letter drafted by staff, he would be in favor of that so more people know about it in order to try to give us a better chance to maximize those dollars.

Mr. McKeon asked if there is anything in the legislation where dollars could be lost. Ms. Mulkerin said she does not think so. Most funding types have a ratio apportioning the federal dollars to the state dollars. One option could be to utilize toll credits to make up that gap in the state match. A big part of this package is Federal Discretionary Programs that leverage state dollars for highways and bridges. The transit side is in a different shape on the state fund side as the payments from the Pennsylvania Turnpike sunset this year. Mr. McKeon said there might be a plan to manipulate existing state funding to get to the \$1 billion match. Ms. Mulkerin said she does not think so due to decreased revenues over time as a result of fuel-efficient cars, decreased traffic, and less travel. Deputy Secretary Shifflet did explain previously about the TROC efforts and with state revenues going down, Federal dollars cannot be stretched as far.

Mr. McKeon asked if a case could be made to our legislators noting if they do not provide the match then we could lose money. Ms. Mulkerin said that she doesn't think we can do that for the highway and bridge side. Mr. Piper said that, if we don't have the match, we don't have the dollars.

Ms. Mulkerin asked if there is anything different on the transit side. Mr. Kilmer said yes and no. The same issues could come about because as all of us get more money there's more to match. With the Turnpike money getting reverted back to the general fund with the automobile sales tax, transit has become more vulnerable for that local match. It would be bad if we receive the federal money but cannot match it. Mr. Piper stated a general letter could be put together that focuses on the overall need to ensure that the state match is available for the highway and bridge side. It is still early in the process and therefore difficult know what exactly we have to work with. PennDOT is projecting that we need \$8 billion per year. Funding is short, so other revenues are needed. Some of the revenues need to go towards ensuring we have that match for the federal dollars.

Mr. Rudderow stated that we are in the 2021-2022 budget year. As these federal dollars start to become known, is there a timetable we are up against? If now is the time to try to engage those people, so that by June 30, 2022, Mr. Rudderow is in favor of doing whatever we have to do to maximize the state dollars. Mr. Piper said that there are increases in the current fiscal year under the Federal legislation. It is a five-year bill that includes the last year

of the current program. Ms. Mulkerin said the bill covers the years 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. It covers the last year of the current program and four years of the next program.

Chairman Rebert said if we work on a draft letter, it will need to be modified based on the funds received for this region. Mr. McKeon stated that the message is it doesn't fix the transportation funding crisis. Our region still has many unmet needs. The letter would just be informing them, so they are not being lobbied and just making them aware of the situation. The board members were in favor of the process of sending a letter.

9. UPDATE ON FFY 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Piper stated that staff has met with District staff four times so far to review the projects on the current TIP, evaluate the status of those projects, analyze where the numbers are, develop relative priorities for the projects already on the program and begin to identify potential new projects that may be added into the program.

There is a meeting scheduled next week with the District. All the priorities of those projects and phases will be organized by the District staff to ensure the dollars available per year and project schedules coincide so projects can be delivered.

Mr. Piper stated that the state will provide estimates on the formula programs. Revised estimates will be provided based on the initial Financial Guidance information. Based on that revised estimate, we are required to have a draft program in place by the end of the calendar year. As the MPO receives new information on some of the other programs that are allowed by the legislation, it will be combined with the information we already have. There may be further revisions after the draft is prepared to make adjustments for the final numbers as they come out. They would be incorporated into the complete draft TIP that will be brought back to the board and sent out to the public next year.

Chairman Rebert stated that the information will be shared prior to any meetings in preparation to vote on a draft TIP at the next meeting. Mr. Piper stated it will be an agreement on our draft project listing. Once that is done, we will move forward through all the other steps in order to put together the draft TIP and draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) itself. Chairman Rebert asked if we need to have a December Coordinating Committee meeting. Mr. Piper said he doesn't think so because it is still in development, and it will be closer to the holiday when a draft is completed. It doesn't have to be approved until January 2022. Ms. Mulkerin is comfortable with submitting a draft as long as the board is comfortable with it. PennDOT would like a project list by the end of the year to ensure the cash flow looks right and the funding codes line up right. This is not the end and conversations continue until the public comment period begins. Mr. Piper has no problem sending the draft project listing to committee members just to get comments on it. A special meeting can be scheduled if the board desires, or a draft TIP can be made available to discuss in January 2022. The board was okay with voting on the draft TIP in January 2022.

10. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON PRIMARY HIGHWAY FREIGHT NETWORK
REVISION REQUEST

Mr. Piper stated that this has significant implications moving forward with potential funding. When the FAST-Act was originally passed a few years ago, it created the Primary Highway Freight System Network which designates a series of corridors around the country that are eligible to receive funding for freight movement. When originally developed, it was based on a highway system that was in the development stage. The Primary Highway Freight System includes essentially the main Interstate Highway System and connectors to major inter-modal connectors.

In Berks County the primary network includes the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-176, I-78 and the portion of I-176 through the Reading urban area. This also links to what is identified as a major inter-modal connector where the pipelines have their Montello terminal just outside of Sinking Spring.

The routing used in the original legislation was I-176 to the West Shore Bypass, the West Shore Bypass to Lancaster Avenue, then Lancaster Avenue through Shillington and up Rt. 724 and into the facility. It is being proposed that FHWA be petitioned to relocate that designation to use all of the West Shore Bypass from I-176 to Rt. 222, and Rt. 222 back to Rt. 724. This change puts that designation on highways that truly serve as major regional freight highways. Those portions of highway carry much more freight traffic than the Lancaster Avenue and the lower portion of Rt. 724 corridors. By being on the designated primary freight system, it gives those roadways a higher level of emphasis for future discretionary funding.

Mr. Piper stated that there is a “once every 5-year” review period to make these changes. The original schedule for this was due back in October 2021, however the comment period was extended through to December 2021. The MPO can make this submission to FHWA ourselves, but it is better to do in conjunction with the state and have their endorsement as well.

An authorization is needed to submit this request to the state and FHWA for this route to be re-designated at this time in this “once in every 5-year” window. Ms. Crobak from FHWA thanked Mr. Piper for sharing the update and presenting this information. She stated that the comment period was extended until December 15, 2021. It would be important to coordinate these recommendations with PennDOT and the Freight Advisory Work Group who will submit those to FHWA.

Mr. Piper had discussions with Mr. Reimert in PennDOT’s Freight Program and with Mr. Walston in FHWA to discuss this process with them. They are in general agreement with the proposal but do not have the final say. The MPO’s backing is needed to make this submission and work it through the rest of the system. Submitting the recommendation is not a guarantee.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to approve submitting this recommendation to PennDOT and the FHWA for consideration. Mr. Rudderow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

11. NEW-REVIEW-APPROVAL OF 2022 SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Mr. Piper stated that this is the annual exercise in meeting federal requirements by adopting the Safety Performance Measures. Targets are set based on the number of fatalities, the rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, the number of serious injuries, the rate of serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and the number of non-motorized fatalities.

The state is required to set the targets each year. MPOs have the option to either accept the state targets or create their own. MPOs across the state have traditionally accepted the state's targets. It was determined that the state did not meet its targets, so we need to look at how we use the Highway Safety Improvement Program dollars around the state and within our MPO.

The statewide targets are roughly a 1% reduction in each of those measures and some of the numbers might be higher because they are projecting actual projection growths. There might be a higher number over what the baseline was.

MOTION: Mr. Rudderow made a motion for the MPO to accept the statewide targets. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

12. UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM UPDATON

Mr. Piper stated that this is a new process set up for applicants which required applicants to submit preliminary applications to be reviewed by PennDOT and the MPO staff with the applicants. There were five initial applications that were submitted. Based on discussions with each applicant following the preliminary application submissions, Cumru Township had a project they withdrew to further refine that project in consideration for a future submission.

There were four other projects that were modified and submitted. They are:

1. Sinking Spring for complete street improvements
2. Albright College for pedestrian safety
3. Governor Mifflin for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements
4. Ontelaunee Township for stormwater improvements

These projects need to be discussed to see what could be funded locally, prioritize the projects and make recommendations through the Technical Committee. Recommendations will be brought back to this committee in January 2022. The deadline for the recommendations is prior to our January meeting. There should be clean recommendations coming out of the Technical Committee review based on the available dollars. There may be more funding available than in the past with the TASA Program which may enable us to

fund more of these recommendations out of our local dollars. Anything that we cannot fund out of our local dollars can be forwarded, with recommendations, to the state for their consideration under the statewide program.

Mr. Rudderow asked if there is a local match. Mr. Piper said yes. The local project sponsor is required to provide all of the pre-construction work, which would mean project identification, develop the plans, get all of the clearances and take it to the point where the project would go to construction. This program would pay 100% of construction costs. Mr. Rudderow asked if there was a challenge a few years ago when money was approved for a project, but the applicant was unable to meet their obligation. Mr. Piper said that, in some cases, the cost of the project ran over. Line Item money was used to supplement that match. Those were projects that drug out over time and were not based on a good initial estimate to begin with. This new process will help that. There was a lot of time spent during those meetings with applicants looking at the proposed cost estimates. This new process provides the applicants a much better understanding on this process between the time the draft application was submitted to when the final application is submitted. They also understand what is involved with costs, the process, and their responsibilities.

Out of the four projects that are listed, Mr. Rudderow said that we cannot help fund all of them. We must select the project that is best and as long as the applicant understands that we are selecting them, and the money is going to be given towards that project, they must be equally committed to the project.

Mr. Piper said there is no action required at this time. It will be taken to the Technical Committee for review and brought back with formal recommendations.

13. LEHNARTSVILLE BRIDGE TOLLING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Piper stated that we are currently in the review phase for the proposal for Lenhartsville Bridge to be tolled. There is a virtual public meeting on-line, and the public comment period extends through next Thursday, November 24, 2021. There was an in-person meeting held on November 1, 2021 at the Kempton Community Center. Staff attended that meeting. Other people in attendance were reviewing the proposal and submitting comments. The need for the project was presented and the potential diversion route would be for traffic to use Old Rt. 22, between Lenhartsville and Krumsville.

The Department spoke about potential improvements that they were willing to consider along that corridor by installing traffic lights at the intersections of Old Lancaster Pike/Rt. 143/Rt. 737 to help ease the traffic flow. There was discussion on potential opportunities for toll exemption for emergency vehicles and for low-income persons to be able to get a toll exemption for one bridge in the state.

The state's intention is to proceed forward and remain aware that there is other legislation that could potentially change the rules. Until action is taken, we are moving ahead under the current state P3 process.

14. MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT

Mr. Piper gave a Major Project Status Report.

15. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Boyer stated that, on behalf of the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership (SRTP), they are in the midst of their Health & Wellness benefit fairs with many of their partners. A lot of their partners have recognized transportation management benefits as part of their Health & Wellness Programs as well as providing some incentives for their employees to participate in the programs to receive Health & Wellness bonus points.

Commuter Services recently wrapped up their *Clash of the Chambers* competition. The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance was the winner in that competition representing our nine counties. They are currently in the midst of a *Clash of the Counties* competition. This is another opportunity for employees of county entities across the nine-county region to track their green trips. There are entries from Berks County competing again against Lancaster, Dauphin, Franklin and other counties.

Mr. Boyer named some outreach efforts to employers in the last 30 days. They included F.M. Brown, Reading Public Library, RACC, Alvernia University, Tower Health, Career Link, and People Share.

In the month of October, there were 82 people that joined the Commuter Services program. People that are tracking trips in the database equaled 5,000 trips, which was 139,000 miles not driven and their income savings was \$78,000.

There was a discussion regarding TIP funding and how it will be addressed in the TIP development process. Yesterday, the SRTP had their Board of Directors meeting. They recently began the process of updating all the participants' contributions from each MPO based on current Census figures. There was a reference made earlier in this meeting whereby cost share is determined by the population of their respected area. The same is done on the SRTP side. The Census numbers change slightly from the old Census numbers to the most current. It did produce a slightly different arrangement with the financial commitment that the SRTP would hope to obtain from their participating MPOs. The current TIP funding amount on the RATS TIP is slightly less than the participatory amount they would hope to have considered as the TIP development moves forward.

Mr. McKeon stated that there was something listed as *Get A Job Get a Ride - A Free Transit Pass* in Lebanon County. How long is the Transit Pass good for and how is the program working? Mr. Boyer stated that it is a very successful program. Commuter Services partnered with Lebanon Transit on the standup of a new transit line along Rt. 72 out of Lebanon and up to the Interstate. It is a popular place for businesses with warehouses and manufacturing facilities. Lebanon Transit allowed us to provide a free pass for any new member who was joining that route that was established. It was an incentive program to get people to ride the bus. Mr. Boyer believes the pass was good for six months. It was a

promotion to identify a mode of transportation that is convenient, timely, safe, cost effective, gets you to and from work and no need to worry about upkeep on a car.

Mr. Piper stated that we have those numbers Mr. Boyer mentioned. They will be taken back to the District for discussion to be put into the TIP. When cuts were made during the last TIP cycle, it was in direct response to the overall reduction in funding available.

16. OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. Piper stated that the City of Reading is the recipient of a \$20,000 grant to do an active transportation plan. We were asked to provide staff support for that plan. Our recommendation is for Mr. Golembiewski to participate in the development of that plan and help coordinate their efforts with the work and information provided in our Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Mr. McKeon congratulated the City of Reading for winning that grant. Mr. Golembiewski was the first person he thought of to help them.
- Mr. Piper stated that PennDOT has gone forward and approved their plan for designating the I-81/I-78 corridor as an Alternative Fuels Corridor. One of the recommendations was to look for locations that needed additional fast charging locations. I-78 in the Hamburg area was targeted. We took the information and the fact sheet provided by PennDOT and forwarded it to all the municipalities along the I-78 corridor to see if they are interested. There was feedback received from Hamburg Borough. The municipalities were asked to reach out to businesses located along the corridor in their municipalities. This is an issue that may be accelerated due to there being specific money in the federal legislation towards installing fast charging stations.

Mr. McKeon asked what the cost of a fast charger is and how many vehicles it can charge at one time. Mr. Piper was not sure. Slow chargers are usually used for overnight charging. Fast chargers usually take 20-30 minutes to charge a vehicle. It would be good to partner this with a convenience store. Hamburg was looking into putting a charging station idea into their Main Street Program.

- Chairman Rebert thanked Mr. Price and Mr. Kilmer for being a part of this group. The board appreciates everything that they have done. They were always good to work with. Mr. Kilmer thanked Chairman Rebert and thanked the committee for their support over the years for BARTA and public transit. It was gratifying working with this committee.

Mr. Price said he appreciates working with the committee and said he learned more acronyms working with RATS than any other place in his life. For that he will be eternally grateful.

Chairman Rebert mentioned Ms. Reed and Mr. Rudderow and assumes there is a good opportunity that both members will be returning. If not, he said it was always good working with both.

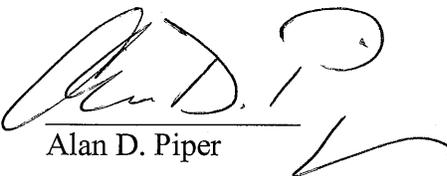
Mr. Rudderow thanked Mr. Rebert and hopes to return in January. He has learned a lot in the past 8 years and could probably spend another eight years to learn a lot more. It has been a pleasure and he appreciated the patience from the members regarding all the questions he asked.

Ms. Reed said she hopes to return as well. It has been very interesting working with everyone and hopes to continue for another few years.

17. ADOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piper seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Date: 1/20/22


Alan D. Piper