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
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
Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0 (Phone)
Shannon Rossman, Berks County Planning Commission
Regina Zdradzinski, Berks County Planning Commission
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission
Laura Mursch, Berks County Planning Commission
Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission
Bill Royer, Rep. Mackenzie
Matt Boyer, Commuter Services
Joe Romano, Larson Design Group
Carol Riley, AIM
Rev. Evelyn Morrison, We the People
Holly Herman, Reading Eagle

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kufro called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2019

   Chairman Kufro asked if there were any questions or comments to the August 15, 2019 Technical Committee Meeting minutes.

   MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to accept the minutes and recommended their approval. Mr. Kilmer 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

   Ms. Leindecker gave an update on Amendments/Modifications to FFY 2019-2022 Highway TIP from Saturday 12, 2019 through September 26, 2019.

   **Amendments:** There were no Amendments.

   **Administrative Actions:** There were eight (8) Administrative Actions.

   **Statewide Administrative Actions:** There was one (1) Statewide Administrative Action.

   Each of the Administrative Actions reallocated funding within existing projects based on need and end of fiscal year.

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

   Mr. Piper said that there were two 4-hour meetings so far with the District with one held on September 12, 2019 and the other on September 26, 2019. Major projects on the TIP were reviewed during the first meeting. Project schedules were reviewed to identify the projects that are anticipated to be funded on the current TIP, those projects that will need to be carried over onto the next TIP and any project that wouldn’t have started until the next TIP. General guidance was given for high, medium or low priorities within the region. These were based on safety, congestion and system continuity.

   A more detailed discussion regarding safety and congestion concerns took place at the meeting last week looking at the dollars available under the Highway Safety Improvement Program and CMAQ Program or where these funds can be used to supplement other projects that need federal NHPP or STP funds.

   Mr. Piper said the next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2019. The District staff will take our ideas and put them into a table that is fundable. There will be a good look at a first cut of projects. The big projects will be the most difficult to incorporate into the program. They include the widening projects on SR 222 and the US 422 Corridor Reconstruction. One overhead railroad bridge has been eliminated from the US 422 project. How do we break up this project into
fundable segments? The original proposal from the Department and the design consultants broke the project up into five separate phases. The cheapest phase was $20 million, which included railroad coordination. Every other phase was over $100 million each and will be impossible to fit it into the funding we expect to receive over a 4-Year Program and the following 8 years of the 12-Year Program, as well. Mr. Piper explained that the consultant was directed to look at the project and identify the most critical issues within the corridor and to see if there is any way to develop breakout projects that begin to address those critical issues. The I-176 Interchange may be an area of focus. It is constrained because of the location of that interchange between two very large, expensive bridges. The design of these bridges and methodology that needs to be used to upgrade or replace them may preclude us from getting anything done in that area.

In the bridge categories, a determination needs to be made whether or not a bridge absolutely needs to be replaced or can’t be preserved at this time. A Bridge Preservation project would get an extra 15-20 years out of a bridge before it needs to be replaced. These are the issues that need to be looked at.

Chairman Kufro said this is just a snapshot of where we are now with the current funding. Things could change in the future if we receive an improved federal funding bill. The current federal funding (FAST Act) expires in September 2020. We need to be creative and work together to come up with a good plan that makes good use of the funding we do receive.

Mr. Krall asked if the phases of 422 were sections of the corridor or were certain bridges going to be phased. Mr. Piper said the initial discussion for the West Shore Bypass project was scheduled to be in sections of the bypass. There is not enough money to do a whole section. We need to see whether there are critical elements that fall within any of those areas that can be addressed within the dollar range we have at our disposal at this time. It is grim. Chairman Kufro said the Department would like to address the ramp at the I-176 exit coming US 422. The one bridge would have to be replaced in order to make that ramp work. The bridges (three river crossings) need to be addressed and there may need to be a Preventive Maintenance contract for these three bridges. Mr. Krall said it would be nice to fix it without spending a lot of money. Mr. Piper said that one of the reasons we would like to move ahead on the West Shore project is that we have so much invested in the Preliminary Engineering phase. If it comes to the point that the West Shore Bypass project goes dormant, those dollars might need to be repaid to the federal government because we cannot keep advancing the project.

Mr. Piper said our next committee meeting is scheduled for November and by then we should have a decent handle on what projects can be included. Chairman Kufro said that there will be more workshop meetings held before then, as well.

Reverend Morrison said that she wanted to make sure from the planning stages into the execution stage that there is a list of potential female-owned and minority-owned businesses that are asked to participate in requests for proposals so that we do still adhere to the state’s standards of participation and the federal CFR and there is minority participation with involvement from the top to the bottom. Chairman Kufro said that is state policy and should not change.
6. **UPDATE ON BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

   Mr. Golembiewski said there is no change from the update given two weeks ago. He said the Steering Committee will be meeting next Wednesday at Berks Nature. Ms. Mursch and Ms. Hain have been listing the potential projects, locations and mapping so we can go ahead as a Steering Committee to begin the process of prioritization.

   Mr. Golembiewski said that public comment on the plan would be deferred until after the holidays.

7. **UPDATE ON LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

   Mr. Piper said the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is also due next year. The key is the funding part of the LRTP that identifies projects and programs looking beyond the four years of the TIP into the 12-Year Program and beyond that.

   He stated that staff has begun updating the background data. We will need to follow the new guidance for both the LRTP and the TIP regarding the inclusion of Performance Measure data and tying down the correlation between the Performance Measures and the selected projects. The TIP and the LRTP would be put out for public review and comment by Spring/Summer and for adoption by the MPO in July 2020.

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

   Mr. Golembiewski stated that this program is the contract between the MPO and the Department for the planning work staff will be doing on behalf of the MPO. It is a two-year document that lays out the tasks that will be done and the funding sources that will be used. The planning funds are separate from the highway project funds.

   This document lays out what we will do and a time line for when we should be doing it. Under new guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), more detailed coordination/analysis is wanted between the MPO, staff and other Planning Partners, the state, and transit agency. They want to see time lines of when projects will get accomplished and what products would come out of these planning efforts whether it is a plan, publication or process.

   Today, there will be a sub-committee meeting to kick this process off. The ultimate goal is to have the UPWP for fiscal years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 adopted by the MPO in January 2020.

   Rev. Morrison asked where the funds come from for this UPWP. Mr. Golembiewski said it is a combination of federal, state and local funding. Mr. Piper said the MPO is required under the Federal Transportation Planning Regulations. Rev. Morrison asked how the community is invited to be a part of the process.
Mr. Golembiewski said the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the two committees that meet (Technical and Coordinating). The committee has representatives from the County, City, municipalities, Transit agency, PennDOT District Office in Allentown, PA, and PennDOT Central Office in Harrisburg, PA. In addition to this various representation, all meetings are open to the public and there is community representation. Mr. Piper stated that there are also provisions built into our plans and programs for soliciting public involvement. These are documented in our Public Participation Plan.

9. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Boyer stated that Commuter Service’s public involvement this past month was centered around a “Walk Like a Boss” campaign. There are five or six different modes of transportation other than driving alone with walking as one of them. There is the ability to track trips of walking to work in the Commute in PA Program and it was a success.

The employer-related activities over this coming month are centered around healthcare and benefits fairs. The employer partners have a say in making sure their employees know the benefits they can get from participating in the Commuter Services programs. Some of these companies are giving their employees credit towards their health insurance premiums for participating in these programs. If they are using a non-driving mode and they track their trips at least twice a week in the PA database, employers will use as deductions towards their insurance premiums costs.

Commuter Services recently filled a position on their staff for Outreach Coordinator. Her name is Heather Kleinfelter.

Mr. Boyer said that the local SRTP Board representation is the three-legged stool comprised of Mr. Golembiewski, Mr. Glisson from SCTA, and Ms. Landis from the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Landis will be retiring as of tomorrow. With losing Ms. Landis as the Chamber’s representative he asked for RATS board members to encourage them to fill this position. They are a vital part of the community.

10. PENNDOT UPDATE ON HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Chairman Kufro stated that he was not going to go through each project listed. Some of them will need to be adjusted as we go through the TIP development meetings.

Mr. Krall said the River Road let date was moved. It is not December 12th anymore. It is now July 23, 2020. There are still issues that need to be worked out.

Chairman Kufro noted that the SR 222/73 project is under construction now.
11. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Johnson said that there is a Reading neighborhood representative from North Second and Buttonwood Streets, Guillelyn Medina, who approached the Mayor’s office with concerns about safety at that intersection. PennDOT is not in charge of these two streets.

There were requests before regarding that location and a traffic study was done for stop signs in June 2018. The study did not warrant stop signs or a traffic signal at that intersection. Buttonwood Street is a heavily travelled route and Second Street is a dead-end north of Buttonwood Street but holds a lot of pedestrian traffic due to businesses located there.

Mr. Johnson said that the City studied it while school was in session. It will be restudied. High-visibility cross walks will be installed. Two portable flashing speed limit signs will be located at Second and Buttonwood Streets periodically. Traffic study will be redone using a different consultant. City Council asked RATS Technical Committee do what they can in this situation. Chairman Kufro asked if the first traffic study was reviewed by PennDOT. Mr. Johnson said no. The request is for a multi-way stop sign. There is a stop sign on Second Street, but Buttonwood Street is uncontrolled. Front and Third Streets have traffic signals. We tried to put heavy line striping down, signage and signage warning up. The study showed the area did not warrant a multi-way stop sign.

City Council is worried about the neighborhood with a school and Opportunity House located in the area. A lot of traffic uses Buttonwood Street and is hard to control. City Council wants to know if the Technical Committee can do anything. Chairman Kufro asked if the city has a consultant helping with this issue. One consultant did the first study and City Council is going to use another consultant for the second study. Chairman Kufro suggested the consultant do a safety study for that intersection and come up with low cost deliverables. Mr. Golembiewski asked if traffic calming was looked at. Mr. Johnson said that City Council did not specifically ask the consultant to look at that; just to look at multi-way or other traffic controls. It was discussed to use the rapid flashing beacon warning device at other intersections in the city. Mr. Johnson said he saw these warning devices on trail crossings. As bicyclists or pedestrian’s approach on the trail, it tripped the signal automatically and early. Chairman Kufro said that, instead of having the consultant do the same study, they should have them investigate the use of funds too.

Reverend Morrison asked who will respond to the citizens. If you have many citizens from the same area express concerns regarding a safety issue, you should be able to respond back to them and, to see this as strong citizen engagement in terms of the need that is in the local neighborhoods as safety issues. It was voiced, a consensus was created by a petition being created. It needs to be recognized as people who live there and a requesting a response to their safety issue. The City of Reading should respond to the citizens and let them know that it was introduced to this body and that they are looking at ways to resolve the issue. This is a measure of prevention. Mr. Johnson said the Technical Committee would not be responsible for that. The City Administration intends to communicate to the citizens after everything is sorted through. Ms. Medina has his contact information and has been in periodic communication since the complaint was filed. There will be communication to the public once everything is sorted. Reverend Morrison asked what date the petition was filed. Mr. Johnson said September 23,
2019. Mr. Johnson said people do not heed traffic signs/sIGNALs. There are some things that traffic control cannot change, and people do not follow traffic laws.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:18 PM. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Date: 11/2/19

Alan D. Piper