

READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

ATTENDANCE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Chris Kufro, PennDOT 5-0, Chair*
David Alas, PennDOT Central Office
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Dave Kilmer, SCTA
Tim Krall, City of Reading

NOT PARTICIPATING

Terry Sroka - Reading Regional Airport Authority
Stan Rugis - City of Reading

OTHERS

Chelsea Beytas, FHWA
Jim Mosca, PennDOT Central Office
Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0
Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0
Mike Donchez, PennDOT 5-0
David Hunter, 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
Matt Boyer, Commuter Services of PA
Bill Royer, Rep. Ryan Mackenzie
Marta Gabriel, Sen. Toomey
Joe Romano, Larson Design Group
Greg Downing, SCTA
Heather Berger, Berks County Information Systems
Lori Schneider, Berks County Information Systems
Malcolm Townes, Berks County Information Systems

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Piper took a verbal roll call of the committee members. Chairman Kufro then called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no business from the floor.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that there are no people on YouTube yet and there are no emails.

3. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON MINUTES FROM TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF JULY 8, 2021

Chairman Kufro asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Technical Committee meeting of July 8, 2021.

MOTION: Mr. Alas made a motion to approve the minutes from the Technical Committee meeting of July 8, 2021. Mr. Kilmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Donchez gave an update on PennDOT's requested Amendments/Modifications to FFY 2021-2024 TIP from July 3, 2021 to August 26, 2021.

- There were 10 Administrative Actions and 3 Statewide Administrative Actions—each of these involve design supplements, PE supplements, current design estimates, utility increases and aligning funding to meet current needs. It also addresses assigning unobligated funds before the end of the fiscal year.
- There were no Amendments.

5. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION TO SCTA TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS

Mr. Kilmer stated that SCTA has updated its Transit Asset Management Plan, which is required every four years. It addresses the maintenance and improvements for assets of the Authority. There are detailed performance goals on pages 84-85. They were able to buy fixed route buses and took the lead in a statewide purchase of shared ride vehicles for nearly all the transit authorities in Pennsylvania, which allowed us to purchase shared ride vehicles again. None were bought for 2 years due to lack of a contract.

SCTA will have by the end of this fiscal year 0% of fixed route buses and 0% of shared ride vehicles that are directly operated past the Useful Life Benchmark (ULB). The ULB used by SCTA is 12 years or 500,000 miles for fixed route buses and 5 years or 150,000 miles for shared ride vehicles. Since the last TAM Plan, the shared ride vehicles for purchase dropped from 17% to 8% past the ULB of 5 years. The scale for all SCTA facilities improved. Previously, some facilities were assessed at a 3 on the 5-point TERM scale. The TERM scale is the 5-category rating system used in FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) to describe the condition of an asset. Now all the facilities are rated at 4 because of upgrades and improvements made since the initial TAM plan. About 10% of equipment owned by SCTA is past its ULB. Most of the facilities are kept for 50 years and

funds are programmed every 10 years for upgrades and maintenance. Shared ride vans are replaced every 5 years.

Mr. Kilmer stated that part of the appendix includes a 25-year capital improvement plan for both BARTA and Red Rose.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend sending the Transit Asset Management Plan and Performance Measure Targets to the Coordinating Committee for approval. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON SCTA SAFETY PLAN AND PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS

Mr. Kilmer stated that this is the update of the Safety Plan in accordance with FTA regulations. This is to create a safety culture and improve safety by setting Performance Measure Targets like the MPO does for highway performance. Performance Targets are listed on page 12 of the plan and includes targets for fixed route, shared ride, and services that are contracted out.

Performance goals are set for fatalities per million vehicle revenue miles, injuries and a rate for injuries, events, and system reliability, which is miles between mechanical road calls. This is a measure of how often passengers are disrupted due to a vehicle failure while it is in service. This does not include things like air conditioning failures. There were updates made to meet all the regulations.

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to recommend sending the Safety Plan and Performance Measure Targets to the Coordinating Committee for review and approval. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. UPDATE ON FY 2022-2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Golembiewski stated that FHWA added a few requirements they want included in the UPWP which consists of more documentation, and milestones with dates and products that will be produced.

We made up charts showing what will be done and when it will be done. To begin the process of updating the UPWP, staff met a few weeks ago to review where we are and where we want to go. With staffing issues and some internal programming issues, some things have not been completed. Financial Guidance Workgroup, TIP process, and LRTP have been ongoing processes. Air Quality Conformity will begin in the spring of this year in conjunction with the development of the TIP. Environmental Justice was started this morning at a meeting with MPOs and RPOs statewide to kick off the data gathering process.

Census 2020 data gathering was supposed to start in January 2021. Unfortunately, the data was only released in August 2021. Population and employment projections are needed for the Travel Demand Model. There was a late start on this, but it is ongoing now. The

Travel Model Validation does not have to be started until the next UPWP in 2024. The Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan is from 2013 and we were unable to work on it last year. Staff met with SCTA on Monday, August 30, 2021 to begin the process of updating the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan which is estimated to require less than a year to complete. The PennDOT Connects, SRTP, and PennDOT Interagency Consultation Work Group are all ongoing.

The Pedestrian Access to Transit Study would have been a follow-up to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Plan. Time and staffing did not allow this project to start. As well, some data issues with the Department need to be discussed prior to developing a Highway Asset Management System Report and a Bridge Asset Management System Report.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that SCTA and their Asset Management Plan have been updated and are anticipated to be approved by the MPO at the next Coordinating Committee meeting. Two potential additions in this UPWP update include the Passenger Rail Study and the Regional Freight Plan.

This is a rough draft of where we would like to go. Things that need to be done but have not been started yet were prioritized. Public Participation and Congestion Management are at the top of the list to be updated immediately after the TIP update is finished. They will both be time and labor intensive.

With the update of the next TIP cycle two years from now, Financial Guidance will be kicked off again in 2023-2024 along with the LRTP. Air Quality Conformity and Environment Justice would kick off with the TIP update process. Now that Census is coming out, that information would be used in all the planning programs and processes as well as the travel model. Travel Demand Model Validation would be kicked off in 2024. The goal is to adopt the Human Services Plan in the summer of 2022. The UPWP will be kicked off again in another two years from now. At this time, it is unknown how long the Regional Freight Plan will take to be completed or the level of MPO involvement in the Passenger Rail Study.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that the UPWP process has two development phases. They are: 1) looking at the products and programs that BCPC staff performs as staff to the MPO; 2) reviewing and updating the document itself, which is 67 pages of text and a few charts. Staff decided to condense this document. In its current form, it is inefficient to update, for billing purposes, and invoicing. The program is set up in 9 major work areas. There are 20 individual tasks that staff bills to. Staff wants to take the 9 major work areas (20 tasks) and condense them into five major work areas while retaining the 20 tasks. Efficiencies that would be gained include: 1) as far as staff billing, it would avoid confusion as to which code should be used based on the type of work performed for a given task; 2) invoicing would be simplified.

This document would be broken up into much smaller, more condensed sections for each one-year period. At the top of each major work area, the budget for both years would be identified instead of having a big chart for each year. As well, instead of showing a general table, there would be information shown specifically for each work area. The handout is a preliminary working

document that is not ready to go to the MPO for adoption. Staff is looking for consensus and direction on the process.

Stakeholders need to review this preliminary document, provide input, and develop a final draft for review by the MPO in November. At that point, it would go to FHWA, which requires a 30-45-day review period before the MPO adopts. Any comments received from FHWA and PennDOT would be addressed, and then a revised document would be provided to the MPO for adoption in January 2022. It must be adopted no later than January 2022.

Mr. Mosca thanked Mr. Golembiewski for the overview, getting the process started early and including the outreach to stakeholders. We need to document the process of how we dole out the work program for our partners at FHWA and FTA. It is a requirement. He said that he likes the idea of consolidation and making the document more efficient. PennDOT would still need to be able to distinguish, out of the 20 tasks, the work that is being done within those group tasks, the products being produced as a result, and the invoicing associated with those tasks. A budget table is required for each year and was provided in Mr. Golembiewski's overview. As we continue to work through this and develop a draft format, Mr. Mosca encourages staff to touch base with PennDOT Program Center and their contract manager regarding the invoicing to ensure there are no issues. He supports staff moving forward.

Mr. Piper asked if PennDOT is still looking for staff to bill to the individual tasks as opposed to work areas. Mr. Piper confirmed that this program would have work areas with sub tasks. Mr. Mosca said that PennDOT still would need to see that distinction among the sub tasks. There is no problem organizing by work area and having sub tasks in it, but a breakdown needs to be applied for the individual tasks. Mr. Piper said that if staff would keep billing by each task, there is really no streamlining of the document and billing/invoicing but rather simply a changing of the paperwork. A meeting will be set up to discuss this issue.

Mr. Krall asked if any comments are needed from the Technical Committee for a recommendation. If so, when would the comments be needed by and when would a recommendation be needed from the Technical Committee. Mr. Piper stated that agreement regarding the concept of streamlining the process is all that is asked of the Technical Committee at this time. Projects are dictated by the tasks that are required by PennDOT under FHWA and FTA agreements. If there were specific agreements or studies for specific areas that the Technical Committee thinks we should be doing, that would be a comment for review. Regarding the timeline, Mr. Piper stated that Mr. Golembiewski will follow-up with a meeting with PennDOT within the next month and put together a draft to go to the Coordinating Committee by November 2021. Mr. Golembiewski wants to meet with the Technical Committee as a Steering Committee to look at this as a group preferably before the October 2021 Technical Committee meeting. If the October 2021 Technical Committee meeting is canceled, then a meeting with the Steering Committee in its place is proposed.

8. UPDATE ON RATS PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL FREIGHT PLAN

Mr. Piper stated that the project had been approved by PennDOT Central Office and is fully funded for \$350,000 total (\$280,000 PennDOT/\$70,000 MPOs). The agreement will be run through

the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's (LVPC) Work Program. The other five participating MPOs would channel their portion of the local match through LVPC.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission staff is still working on draft agreements between themselves and the other MPOs to contribute the funding. They are also working to develop the initial scope of work that we will be using for our RFP to obtain a consultant to do the regional freight study.

Chairman Kufro said it is a positive thing to be working with other regions to put this freight plan together.

9. UPDATE ON FFY 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Piper stated that the Environmental Justice update kick-off started this morning. It ties together various EJ requirements, asset management issues, and other things that need to be looked at as we get into project development.

There are meetings scheduled with the District later this month to begin reviewing the existing projects, documenting where we stand, identifying what we need to do, and evaluating what resources are available for adding new projects. This ties into the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). There is currently active solicitation of our municipalities for any new project recommendations to consider moving forward. It is unlikely that a project would come in that wasn't considered already and make the program due to funding issues. This is still a valuable exercise in terms of understanding the needs of the municipalities' infrastructure and their concerns within their area. At a minimum, recommended projects are evaluated and considered for inclusion in our LRTP update.

In the past, we were too vague in what we asked for. We got a lot of projects that were maintenance-related projects that did not meet the requirements for inclusion in the TIP. This time, more details relating to the eligibility requirements were given which include: 1) roadways had to be on the Federal Aid Highway System, 2) bridges needed to be capital bridge projects and over 20 feet in length if located on a state or municipal highway, and 3) safety issues could be on any highways provided they correlated to the overall safety needs of the region. The deadline for municipal project recommendations is the end of October 2021.

10. UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM

Mr. Piper stated that this program changed this year in that it is entirely online through PennDOT's system. Applicants were required to register and were required to submit a pre-application by August 16, 2021. Those pre-applications were distributed to the district and are currently under review through meetings with PennDOT's consultant, the District and MPO staff.

There were five pre-applications received for Berks County.

- Albright College – Pedestrian safety initiatives in the area located in Northeast Reading
- Sinking Spring Borough – Complete Street improvements related to their redevelopment project.
- Cumru Township – Flood Control projects

- Governor Mifflin School District – Pedestrian and sidewalk issues in their growing campus in Shillington Borough
- Ontelaunee Township – Stormwater improvements

Part of the goal of going through the pre-application process is to review each of the pre-applications with the applicant which provides them the opportunity for revision that further elaborates upon the project and better defines the scope of work. There were two appointments already and three more scheduled for next week. The pre-application would be given back to the applicant to make necessary edits. All applications must formally be submitted by October 15, 2021. After that, they get sent to PennDOT for review and then to the Planning Partners and Districts. On October 25, 2021, they are then available for the MPO’s review and recommendations.

There is a limited amount of dollars available at the MPO that can be directly allocated towards projects. For a one-year period, it would be \$278,000; a two-year period would be \$556,000. The recommendations will then get forwarded to the state as they begin putting together a statewide program. There is \$18 million available for the statewide program.

Mr. Piper stated that the goal would be to make recommendations to the state at our January meeting. It is anticipated that the state will award their money in late January or February 2022. The selected applicants would start working on reimbursement agreements with a goal of having a project that is eligible to start receiving funding in October 2022.

11. PENNDOT UPDATES ON BRIDGE AND TASA/MTF PROJECTS

Chairman Kufro stated that, in the report the Lenhartsville Bridge shows a let date of September 2021, which is not correct. It is still a candidate for tolling on the Interstate as part of the P3 initiative. Statewide, it is one of 9 candidate bridges. A second public meeting is being planned for November 2021. PennDOT is still moving ahead with Final Design.

If this bridge becomes active and gets included with that list, it would be part of a larger bid package, go to a larger contracting entity with the other nine candidate bridges, and could be let sometime in 2022. There will be more information to follow.

12. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Boyer stated that the telework participation and networking with employers is very high. There are increases in transit and carpooling tracking in our Commute PA System over the past month and continues trending up.

There are jobs out there but not enough people to fill them. Employers are reaching out for help with transportation alternatives. Vanpooling has resurfaced and there are a number of employers who are willing to pay the costs for vans to get people back and forth from work. It is more cost effective to hire someone and keep them than it is to lose them a week later because they don’t show up for work and have to retrain new employees. Commuter Services is working with Boscov’s and Godiva employers in Berks County to help with their workforce needs.

September brings "Car Free Day". There were 147 new members that joined the Commute PA Program. Those new members tracked over 6,000 green trips, 171,000 miles were taken off the road because of those green trips, which resulted in \$96,000 in savings.

Mr. Golembiewski, Chairman of the SRTP, stated that we are in the process of negotiating a new contract with AECOM, Mr. Boyer's employer. As part of negotiations, effective the end of November 2021, Mr. Boyer and his staff will no longer retain office space. They all commute to York County and now will be going 100% telework. They will all be using alternative methods and taking miles off the road themselves.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

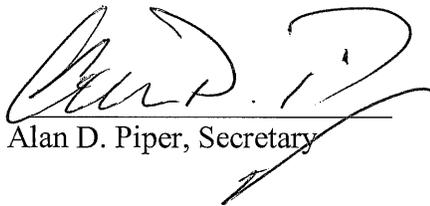
There was no other business.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that there were five people on Youtube and no comments.

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kilmer seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM

Date: 11/4/21


Alan D. Piper, Secretary