

MINUTES

SHENANGO VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 16, 2008 – 10:30 A.M. - MCRPC Offices
Hermitage, PA

PERSONS PRESENT

Kathy Zook
Mirta Reyes-Chapman
Mary Yasnowsky
Phil Yasnowsky
Bill Petit
Jeff Dunlap
Nancy Leone
Gary Hittle
Shirley Cooper
Rick Whitten
Jerry Johnson
Debbie Scruci
John Zohoranacky
Matt Stewart
Lisa Holm Schrader
Marcia Hirschmann
Stephen Theiss
Mike Wilson
Mark Miller
Dave Beatty
Ron Faull
Tom Paxton
Wendy Campbell
Pat Turner
Pete Longiotti
Patricia Wimer
Andrea Folkertsma
Vance Oakes
David George
Dick Brandes
Tom Tulip
Don Hall
Chris Boyer-Kratz
Erin Wiley Moyers
Michael T. Duf
Daniel Gracenin
Elliott Lengel

REPRESENTING

Eastgate COG
Eastgate COG
Interested Citizen
Shenango Township
PennDOT
PennDOT
Rep. Dick Stevenson
Hempfield Township
Self
Pymatuning Township
Mercer Borough
Mercer Borough
Mercer Borough
MCRPC
MCRPC
Hermitage City
Mercer County Trails Assoc., Inc.
Sharpsville Borough
Mercer County
Liberty Township
Liberty Township
Pine Township
Wilmington Township
Senator Robbins
Greenville Borough
Springfield Township
Grove City Borough
Grove City Borough
West Middlesex Borough
Jefferson Township
Mercer County Regional COG
PennDOT
PennDOT
PennDOT
PennDOT
MCRPC
Findley Township

Mark Longietti
CALL TO ORDER

State Representative

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING JULY 15, 2008

Ms. Hirschmann asked for any additions, corrections or deletions to the Minutes of the July 15, 2008 meeting. There being none, Ms. Hirschmann asked for a motion to approve. Mr. George so moved, Mr. Tulip seconded. The motion passed.

TIP MODIFICATIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Mr. Stewart explained that Bob Hannigan, Kristin Egresits and Adam Grimes from PennDOT are on a conference call, since they could not attend the meeting. Ms. Egresits first explained an administrative action for informational purposes. She mentioned that under FFY 2007-2010, they moved money, in order to not lose the money, from the 3R line item into SR 208 Borough line to SR 58.

Ms. Egresits next explained one amendment under FFY 2009-2012 which is to add the East Lake Road project to the TIP with SXF funds (earmark funds) and the local match so that the locals could begin the engineering study. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that East Lake Road had an earmark of \$100,000, but they did not have the local match. Meetings had been held with the community and PennDOT to answer questions. Since that time, East Lake Road was designated by the Feds as a local federal aid route, which freed up the ability for that money to be used. PennDOT held a couple meetings with the local officials from Pymatuning Township at which time a resolution was passed in order to follow PennDOT policy and rules for consolidating out the engineering proposal on the TIP. There being no questions, a motion was made by Mr. George and seconded by Mr. Petit to approve this TIP amendment. The motion passed.

Ms. Egresits discussed 4 administrative actions for informational purposes. The first administrative action is to add the Highland Road Improvement II Home Town Street Project to the TIP so that it could be let with the Highland Road Project in November 2008. She noted that they exhausted the TE line item as the funding source for that project. The second administrative action is to add the Hogback Road Bridge T-423 local bridge to the TIP. The funding for this is coming from the PE phase of the Walnut Street Bridge which is going to be designed in-house. The third administrative action is to fund the 2009 Act 44 Resurfacing Project and to cover the actual expenditures on the GR 2 and the GR 1 from 2008. The funding for this is coming from the Mercer Act 44 2009 line item. The fourth administrative action is to move PE funds into Final Design on three local bridges which are Walnut Street Bridge, the Oak Hill Road Bridge and the Redfoot Road Bridge over Otter Creek.

FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL APPLICATION DISCUSSION AND RANKINGS

Mr. Gracenin explained that this is a TE project, but is at the Federal level and all projects would be 100% funded. He mentioned that we will prioritize the projects, forward it onto the State and a state group will review the applications state-wide. The state group will make the decision-making process of who gets funded and which do not get funded. He stated that there is \$12 million

available at the State level; 96 applications were received state-wide with a total request of about \$65 million. Project sponsors were next given a chance to briefly explain their project.

Mr. John Zohoranacky from Mercer Borough explained their project noting that they have issues with 5 traffic lights which stop traffic and are also used by school children. He mentioned that they need to replace these for the children's safety. He noted that U.S. and State routes bisect the town and 90% of the children cannot walk to school because of these crossing/safety issues. He mentioned that they have specific ranking of priorities.

Ms. Lisa Holm Schrader from Greenville Borough explained 2 projects in the Greenville/Hempfield area for old signals/sidewalks which need to be brought up to date because of safety issues. She mentioned that a number of students use these signals/sidewalks on a daily basis.

Mr. Mike Wilson from Sharpsville Borough explained their application which is part of another ongoing project. He mentioned that they are moving forward with another streetscape project to provide complete safe access to schools.

Ms. Hirschmann explained that only the voting member can rank these project applications. She mentioned that we will tally these applications and come back to this item later. Mr. Dick Brandes stated that it is hard to rank projects without actually going to the sites. Mr. Bill Petit agreed. He also noted that since Mercer Borough has 5 issues with traffic lights, that they might want to focus on 1 or 2 issues as the first priority with a cost estimate and group the others with a cost estimate. Mr. Jerry Johnson mentioned that all roads leading to Mercer are old traffic lights and are 25-30 years old.

CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS TO ADD MERCER BOROUGH AND PYMATUNING TOWNSHIP TO THE MPO COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Mr. Gracenin explained that he received two requests to add Mercer Borough and Pymatuning Township to the MPO Committee. He stated that the Bylaws were recently updated, which now has a cap of 25 voting members. He mentioned that if these two requests are approved today, the MPO Committee will be at their cap of 25 voting members. Any future requests will be on a first come, first serve basis and would be discussed for membership if and when a municipality might withdraw.

There being no questions, a motion was made by Mr. Lengel and seconded by Mr. George to approve adding Mercer Borough and Pymatuning Township to the MPO Coordinating Committee. The motion passed.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Mr. Stewart gave a brief update on the Transportation Enhancement Projects: 1) PennDOT is waiting for the executed USACOE Lease Agreement for the **Mercer County Trails Association – Trout Island Trail Project** and construction plans are still under review. 2) The **Shenango Valley Bikeway/Pedestrian Walkway Project** is under construction. Work is progressing in the catch basin replacement throughout the route and work has begun on the Highland Road sidewalk. The majority of the project should be completed before the end of 2008, depending on the weather, with final restoration taking place in the Spring of 2009. 3) PennDOT is scheduled to review the revised project plans in a few weeks for the **Borough of Sharpsville Retaining Wall Project – Streetscape Phase V (Walnut Street) Project**. Final approval and bid letting is being coordinated. 4)

Construction is complete on the original contract for the **Borough of Sharpville – Streetscape Phase VI (Milliken Avenue – Devil’s Way to Third Street & Fourth Street – Hazen Road to Koehler Road Project)**. Extra work has been authorized and should be completed in approximately one week. 5) PennDOT is reviewing the preliminary plans for the **City of Sharon 2007 Townscape Project** and the City has requested a change in the Lighting Plan, which was addressed and completed. 6) The **Highland Road Widening TE – Phase II Project** will be let in November of 2008 and construction will occur in 2009. 7) The **East State Street/Maple/Dutch Lane Intersection Project** is being engineered and is on schedule for construction in the Summer of 2009. 8) The **Greenville Streetscape Phase II Project** is progressing with all the concrete curbing and light poles to be finished by December 2008 with paving to be in 2009.

FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL APPLICATION DISCUSSION & RANKINGS (Continued)

Mr. Stewart next presented the results from the tally sheets. The top project was the Greenville Public School Project (71.89 points); Greenville’s St. Michael’s School Project (69.44 points); Sharpville School Project (67.11 points); and Mercer School Project (64.22 points).

In discussion, Mr. Stewart asked if Mercer Borough’s ranking hurt by asking for additional funds. Mr. Jerry Johnson made case to MPO Committee stating that this is absolutely needed for the Borough. Ms. Egresits mentioned that once these applications are submitted to the state, you cannot change them. Mr. Stewart explained that when he submits the rankings to the state for these Safe Routes to School Applications, he will explain that there are five projects ranked for the Mercer Borough School Project, which could be broken down into 1 or 2 projects. It was also noted that the two voting members from PennDOT did not vote regarding this item. Mr. Petit stated that traffic projects are not necessarily a perfect fit for the Safe Routes to School project, but mentioned other possibilities of funding for the project. Ms. Hirschmann agreed with Mr. Petit. She mentioned that all projects submitted are good projects and the MPO should look at other possibilities. Mr. Hannigan stated that this may be a candidate for the Smart Transportation Program. Mr. Tulip mentioned that presentations would have been helpful before the ranking was done. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that we never have upfront drawings or specs. He noted that at the next MPO meeting, we should discuss this in more detail about what the TE process should be and address dividing pots of money. Ms. Hirschmann also mentioned about reactivating the Technical Committee. Mr. Petit suggested putting 25-30 people from the MPO Committee on a bus and look at the transportation issues in Mercer County.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Hittle to present them as ranked from the tally sheets. Mr. Lengel seconded and mentioned that the best way to send in rankings is to add comments and explain that Mercer Borough did what they were told. The motion passed.

I-80 TOLLING UPDATE

Mr. Gracenin mentioned that the Feds have rejected the application from Pennsylvania to toll I-80, so for the time being it is dead. He did explain that Act 44, which is State legislation, is still in play until June 2010. He mentioned that the State needs to find a way to take care of this funding issue. Mr. Petit stated that there are revenue shortfalls growing every year; maintenance costs going way up (salt 40%+). Representative Longiotti mentioned that the gas tax is not the answer as the automobile’s mileage gets better. He stated that we need to look at Vehicle Miles Travelled and tax

based on that or pay for use. He mentioned that this is part of a long term solution. Mr. Petit mentioned that utilities are paid that way, pay for use. Mr. Rowe asked where the money for roads comes from. Mr. Petit stated that most comes from fuel taxes. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that the amount hasn't changed since 1990, there is less money in the Highway Trust Fund due to inflation. Mr. Petit also noted that the Vehicle Miles Travelled in 2007 went down.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gracenin explained that the MPO meeting in November 2008 most likely will be cancelled, since we had to hold today's special meeting. If the meeting in November is not necessary, a notice will be mailed to that effect.

Mr. Petit mentioned that the Baker Hill Road Bridge in Delaware Township was closed and they are working on procuring a temporary bridge to provide one lane access. Representative Longietti publicly thanked Mr. Petit and PennDOT.

Mr. Stewart mentioned the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative. He noted that there is \$60 million in Federal and State Transportation Funds available for projects that are basically strong in SMART Transportation aspects. He mentioned that projects could receive up to \$5 million each and applications would be due no later than December 15, 2008. Mr. Petit stated that he would like to speak about this at an upcoming MPO meeting.

Mr. Lengel mentioned the agility project with PennDOT maintenance regarding updating of guardrails/cables in Findley Township. He explained that he would like to see PennDOT representatives about offering to help fix the system. Mr. Petit stated that he would like to set up a meeting with the Township.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel M. Gracenin,
MPO Secretary