

MINUTES

SHENANGO VALLEY METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 12, 2009 – 10:30 A.M. - MCRPC Offices
Hermitage, PA

PERSONS PRESENT

Ron Faull
Harmon Fennell
Dick Brandes
Barb Brown
Stephen Theiss
Jim Morton
Robert Crothers
Bob Lucas
Jeff Dunlap
Gary Hittle
Wendy Campbell
Brenda Tomko
Diane Helbig
Marcia Hirschmann
Shirley Cooper
Joe Pinchot
Nancy Leone
Andrea Folkertsma
Tom Tulip
Rick Whitten
Pete Longiotti
Ryan T. Eggleston
Nathan S. Clark, Jr.
Jim Rowe
Deborah Gabriel
Don Hall
Mariah Hanson
Mary Styn
Jeremy Coxe
Mike Schultz
Robin Metz
Chris Conti
Matt Stewart
Daniel Gracenin

REPRESENTING

Liberty Township
Shenango Township
Jefferson Township
Springfield Township
Mercer County Trails Assoc., Inc.
Wolf Creek Township
Wolf Creek Township
Sharon City
PennDOT
Hempfield Township
Wilmington Township
Representative Longietti
Representative Brooks
Hermitage City
Self
The Herald
Representative Stevenson
Grove City Borough
Mercer County Regional COG
Pymatuning Township
Greenville Borough
Greenville Borough
Self
Pymatuning Township
PennDOT
PennDOT
PennDOT
Senator Arlen Specter
Hermitage City
PennDOT
PennDOT
MCRPC
MCRPC
MCRPC

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Ms. Hirschmann asked for any additions, corrections or deletions to the Minutes of the February 10, 2009 meeting. There being none, Ms. Hirschmann asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Longiotti so moved, Ms. Brown seconded. The motion passed.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Mr. Stewart gave a brief update on the Transportation Enhancement Projects: 1) Plans and documentation were sent to PennDOT for final review and bid scheduling for the **Mercer County Trails Association – Trout Island Trail Project**. There is a 50/50 chance that construction will take place this year. 2) PennDOT is reviewing the revised plans for a retaining wall that were resubmitted for the **Borough of Sharpsville Retaining Wall Project – Streetscape Phase V (Walnut Street)**. Winslow Engineering has been contacting PennDOT weekly regarding the final approval and bid letting date. 3) The design has been submitted to PennDOT, but some easements are required that were not previously procured for the **City of Sharon 2007 Streetscape Project**. 4) The **Greenville Streetscape Phase II Project** should be finished within the next month.

PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Stewart explained that there is \$60M available State-wide under the Smart Transportation money, which links transportation and land use planning to enhance communities. The State received 388 applications, a lot more than they had expected. He noted that three applications were submitted from Mercer County: 1) City of Hermitage - Lamor Road Sidewalks - \$200,000; 2) Mercer Borough – Corridor Study along U.S. 19 - \$200,000; and 3) City of Sharon – close Porter Way and provide a pedestrian walkway between the Penn State Campus and downtown - \$400,000. He noted that PennDOT is planning to announce who will be awarded those funds on May 27, 2009.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESSES PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Stewart mentioned that since our last MPO meeting, Whitman, Requardt & Associates, Consultants for this project, have been working on Phase I of this plan by getting public comment, doing a lot of the background research, spoke with Dan Walston at FHWA and Eastgate COG and compiling the feedback from the stakeholders. He stated that WR&A are still on schedule to have Phase I completed by the end of the year.

ARRA (ECONOMIC STIMULUS) UPDATE

Mr. Hall from PennDOT gave the status of the economic stimulus projects in Mercer County. He stated that there were six stimulus projects planned for Mercer County and one project was let so far for the railroad crossing markings project, and is being done district-wide. He noted that the cost for these six projects is over \$10.7M. (A copy is attached to and made a part of the permanent record of Minutes.) Mr. Nate Clark asked about the durable railroad crossing pavement markings. He had read that those are normally redone every 4 years. Mr. Hall stated that it has been longer than 4 years since this has been done and PennDOT felt that this was a priority based on a safety standpoint. Ms. Brown questioned the SR 18/358 resurfacing project in Greenville Borough, Pine, Hempfield, and New Vernon Townships. She stated that SR 18/358 does not go through Pine. Mr. Hall stated that it should read Perry Township and not Pine Township.

2009 TIP MODIFICATIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Mr. Schultz from PennDOT, via phone conference, reviewed the Highway/Bridge TIP modifications. They are: 1) The PA 258 Bridge over Black Run, Tinkers Run and the Cranberry Road Bridge were advanced to the construction phase and the money came from the SD Bridge Line item. 2) Mr. Schultz noted that this second item is related to the first item. The 2009 TIP Line Item Reserve received money from the PA 258 Bridge over Black Run, Tinkers Run and the Cranberry Road Bridge; advanced the construction phase of the bridge projects and moved money out of year into Line Item Reserve. 3) The SD Bridge Line Item funded the PA 258 Hope Mills Road Bridge for \$800,000. The PA 258 Hope Mills Road Bridge had a funding change and increase of funds. The Baker Hill Road over Sugar Run Bridge received the \$800,000 from the Hope Mills Road Bridge. The Baker Hill Road over Sugar Run Bridge had \$500,000 put back in the Line Item Reserve. The Baker Hill Road over Lenango Creek moved \$450,000 into the Line Item Reserve. The Baker Hill Road over Lenango Creek was then funded with additional funds into the Line Item Reserve and also to cover the current cost estimate. 4) The PA 258 Bridge over Black Run gave some money in 2010 to the SR 3009 Little Nech Creek. 5) The Diamond Road Bridge moved \$160,000 and \$40,000 into the Oakland Avenue Bridge to cover additional legal fees on the Oakland Avenue Bridge project. 6) The Diamond Road Bridge moved money into the Race Road Bridge in order to cover the consultant agreement costs of the PE phase of the project. 7) The PA 258 Hopes Mill Road Bridge moved money into the US 62 Bridges to cover additional funds needed to cover final design costs; and 8) The HSIP project – guiderail upgrades in Mercer County moved money to cover estimated construction costs into the Safety Line Item – 2010.

In discussion, someone questioned the status of the Oakland Avenue Bridge. It was noted that there are some ongoing legal battles concerning this project. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lucas to approve the Highway/Bridge TIP Modifications. Ms. Brown seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Gracenin next discussed the Transit TIP Amendments. He noted that because of the additional stimulus dollars, there are 7 new projects noted under Federal Funds marked ARRA, which had been identified and will be completed using the stimulus dollars. The number is firm on how much money they will be receiving and the new projects will be able to move forward. He noted that since they are new projects, we need to make an amendment to the TIP. Next, he noted that under the 2009-10 Transit TIP, the Construction of Vehicle Storage project is earmarked money, which was never allocated to a project and put on the TIP. He noted that we need to make an amendment to the TIP also for that project. He stated that all of the matching funds are in place for the two projects noted above. A motion was made by Ms. Brown to approve the Transit TIP Amendments noted above. Mr. Longiotti seconded. The motion passed.

PA 60 RE-DESIGNATION AS I-376 – LETTER OF SUPPORT

Ms. Hirschmann explained that a sample letter of support was mailed in everyone's packet. Mr. Hall from PennDOT stated that the letter of support is self explanatory and is a requirement. The MPO Committee would need to support the project in order for the Department to make application to FHWA for the re-designation. Mr. Hall gave a brief update on the project. In discussion, Mr. Whitten asked what the cost would be in just changing the name of the highway. It was noted that in Mercer County the cost would be around \$1.3M. Ms. Brown asked if this re-designation wasn't voted down by the MPO a several years ago. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that it was put on the agenda for discussion, but he does not remember the outcome. He stated that he would have to look at prior Minutes. She noted that since this was "right sized" it's not as big of a deal. Mr. Clark questioned if PA 60 would cease to exist in Farrell/Sharon. Mr. Hall stated that I-376 would end at I-80. He noted

that there has been discussion about leaving the portion from I-80 into Sharon, PA be kept PA 60 or it could be changed to another route. Mr. Rowe questioned how this project was downsized so much. PennDOT is going to redesign various intersections. The interchange at Route 318 has a marginal sight distance issue. In order to fix it completely to make it fully compliant, we would have to replace the bridge, cut down the size of the hill, etc. He noted that they received a design exception from FHWA that they do not have to address this now. Ms. Brown questioned if we are opening up the MPO to future major commitments. Mr. Hall stated yes, but will be part of the Interstate TIP. Mr. Conti questioned if Lawrence County would remain tolled with this re-designation. Mr. Hall was not sure, but guess yes. Mr. Theiss questioned if we are changing the road over to an Interstate, would this lower our TIP. Mr. Hall stated yes, road miles will go down to some degree. He also stated that we will come out ahead in the end. Mr. Clark questioned if there is still a big disparity between the State and Interstate criteria, or is that a thing of the past. Mr. Hall noted that standards were similar then and now, roads will have to be updated. After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Brown to approve signing the sample letter of support. Ms. Folkertsma seconded. The motion passed.

2011 TIP PROCESS AND FEDERAL REAUTHORIZATION

Ms. Metz from the Central Office stated that a financial guidance work group meeting was held last week. She noted that there was a lot of discussion about whether we should move forward with the TIP update considering all the funding shortfall, Act 44, etc. The group will reconvene to formalize a recommendation to the planning community. The group did not set a date to reconvene, but they will move ahead with the 12-Year Program update regardless. Ms. Metz stated that they will convene some type of conference call with the MPOs and RPOs once a recommendation is finalized.

Ms. Metz stated that there are a few major hurdles with the Federal Reauthorization. The Senate has not taken out any legislation on its own. Also, the Senate does not know how to fund this. The highway trust fund is facing financial troubles. She noted that the proposed level of funding is around \$450M. She also stated that there likely will be no vote on legislation before next spring.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that the State Transportation Commission Hearings are scheduled for August 5th in Erie, PA. Currently the next MPO meeting is scheduled for August 11th, but this meeting might be moved so that the Coordinating Committee has an opportunity to discuss what should be brought before the State Transportation Commission at the STC Hearings.

STU LINE ITEM DISCUSSION

Mr. Hall from PennDOT stated that the MPO gets \$641,250 for STU funding for 2009. The funds are up to the MPO to decide how to use without influence from PennDOT. Currently, PennDOT does not have a plan for 2009-10 funds and they want to have a discussion about this. PennDOT would like to have an open discussion about how money should be spent. Money is to be used by October 1, 2009, obligated by August 1, 2009 (80%/20% split).

Ms. Hirschmann stated that they wanted to use 2009 STU funds for the Maple/State Street Intersection Project, but it is looking like it will not occur this year. She also noted that the Lamor Road improvement project (from Route 18 to Kenray Drive) is almost ready to be constructed. She noted that the project is not on the TIP, because they had a DCED grant and other sources of funding. They need two more right-of-ways to procure. She noted that the DCED grant runs out June 30th, so project is in jeopardy. The City has asked DCED for an extension, but this is unlikely. If they lose

the grant money, the City would be interested in STU funding. Mr. Coxe further explained that this project is almost ready to go.

Mr. Lucas from the City of Sharon stated that the City does not have anything to formally ask for at this time. Ms. Mariah Hanson felt that the Borough of Sharpsville may have a project. Mr. Whitten stated that there is a road near the Greenville Reynolds Industrial Development Park that is not up to spec. Mr. Hall noted that funding could not be used outside of urban area.

Mr. Gracenin asked Mr. Schultz if we could use the STU funds to purchase software licenses or for the expenditure of an employee, such as a GIS person. Mr. Schultz stated that he would have to check into that.

Mr. Tulip asked Mr. Coxe if funding is lined up and what the amount is for the Lamor Road project. Mr. Coxe stated that the total estimate is about \$650,000. He noted that local and state money is available to do the match at the 80%/20%. Ms. Cooper expressed her complaints concerning East Lake Road. She asked if the STU funds could be used for this road. Mr. Stewart stated that this project is outside of the urban area. Mr. Gracenin stated that East Lake Road is a Federal aid road. Mr. Hall and Mr. Rowe stated that other options have been looked at.

Mr. Stewart asked Mr. Schultz if he had the answer about purchasing software. Mr. Schultz stated that he thinks it is, but he will meet with FHWA to find out for sure. Mr. Stewart stated that he will send out an update to the MPO Committee on how the STU funds can be used.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that he would like to e-mail meeting notices, etc. to MPO members in the future. He asked the Committee if they are interested in receiving their packet by e-mail, to let him know. Mr. Hall stated that he is seeing some good (low) bids on the stimulus projects, so we may have additional money for projects.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel M. Gracenin,
MPO Secretary