

MINUTES

SHENANGO VALLEY METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 30, 2009 – 10:30 A.M. - MCRPC Offices  
Hermitage, PA

PERSONS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Dick Brandes  
Jeff Dunlap  
George Elliott  
Phil Yasnowsky  
Mary Yasnowsky  
Kathleen Rodi  
Ron Faull  
Dave Beatty  
E. Don Marshall  
Ed Winslow  
Harmon Fennell  
Stephen Theiss  
Elliott Lengel  
Mark Miller  
Russell Jones  
Betty Fischer  
Jim Morton  
Andrea Folkertsma  
Robert Crothers  
Michael Deiberl  
Tom Tulip  
Denise Anthony  
Marcia Hirschmann  
Jeremy Coxe  
John Zohoranacky  
Ryan T. Eggleston  
Bill Petit  
Erin Wiley Moyers  
Mariah Hanson  
J. Parihar  
Phillip A. Rau  
Don Hall  
Mark Longietti  
Deborah Casadei  
Debbie Kochems  
Christopher Engelsiepen

Jefferson Township  
PennDOT  
Pine Township  
Shenango Township  
Self  
Eastgate  
Liberty Township  
Liberty Township  
Hempfield Township  
Winslow Engineering  
Shenango Township  
Mercer County Trails Assoc., Inc.  
Findley Township  
Mercer County  
PennDOT Bureau of Aviation  
Representative Michele Brooks  
Wolf Creek Township  
Grove City Borough  
Wolf Creek Township  
PennDOT, District 1-0  
Mercer County Regional COG  
Senator Robbins  
Hermitage City  
Hermitage City  
Mercer Borough  
Greenville Borough  
PennDOT  
PennDOT  
PennDOT  
PennDOT  
Greenville Record-Argus  
PennDOT  
State Representative  
PennDOT  
Congresswoman Dahlkemper  
Wilmington Township

Shirley Cooper  
Kim DiCintio  
Matt Stewart  
Daniel Gracenin

Self  
Mercer County Regional COG  
MCRPC  
MCRPC

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:34 a.m. A quorum was present.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING MAY 12, 2009

Ms. Hirschmann asked for any additions, corrections or deletions to the Minutes of the May 12, 2009 meeting. There being none, Ms. Hirschmann asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Tulip so moved, Ms. Folkertsma seconded. The motion passed.

### 2009 TIP MODIFICATIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Mr. Schultz from PennDOT, via phone conference, reviewed the Highway/Bridge amendments. They are: 1) Movement of STU money from the STU line item (\$229,000) to the Trout Island Trail Transportation Enhancement Project. He noted that this action was approved by a special telephone/e-mail ballot on June 22, 2009 and no action is required. 2) The second amendment had a low cost bid savings on two group paving projects. That money was applied towards the 3020 Valley View paving project and the SR 322 project. Both of these projects are Economic Recovery projects and were approved by a special telephone/e-mail ballot.

Mr. Schultz next reviewed the Highway/Bridge administrative actions. They are: 1) The SR 258 over Nelson Run project received \$100,000 from the 2009 TIP Line Item Reserve to cover additional piling costs. 2) The PA 258 Hope Mills Road Bridge Project received additional funding to cover actual bid costs from the PA 258 over Black Run Project, which had some cost savings. 3) The US 19 Corridor Study (\$200,000) of STP money was given to this project from the PCTI Smart Transportation Initiative Central Office Reserve Line Item. 4) The Highland Road, Phase 2 project moved bid cost savings of \$467,200 of STP funds and \$116,800 of 581 funds which were applied to the Broadway Avenue project to cover right-of-way impacts and additional costs. 5) The Walnut Streetscape Extension project received \$259,900 from the Central Office Line Item Reserve Transportation Enhancement money.

Mr. Schultz next explained the Transit amendments. They are: 1) Construction of a Vehicle Storage Facility for \$209,000 which is using earmarked money that was never allocated. 2) Small Transit Vehicles were purchased for \$186,744; Radio Equipment was purchased for \$55,000; Camera Surveillance Equipment was purchased for \$200,000; the Transit Enhancement Project was funded for \$6,168; Shop/Garage Equipment was purchased for \$60,000; Video Conference and Computers were purchased for \$30,000; and Interior and Exterior Office and Garage Improvements was funded for \$78,903. All of this money was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and no action is required. In discussion, Ms. Folkertsma asked about transit being on the TIP. Mr. Gracenin stated that TIP money is for any project that has to do with transportation. Ms. DiCintio next explained the transit amendments. In discussion, Ms. Folkertsma asked why Sharon is listed. Mr.

Tulip explained that Sharon is the designated grantee for the funds. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lengel and seconded by Mr. Tulip to approve the Transit TIP Amendments noted above. The motion passed.

### STU LINE ITEM FUNDS

Mr. Stewart explained that the MPO and PennDOT recently learned that STU funds can now be used anywhere in the County, not just the urbanized area, as was previously thought. He mentioned that in June, a special phone ballot was approved for \$229,000 for the Trout Island Trail, because their estimate ended up being \$409,000, but once it was bid out, the project ended up being more expensive than that. He mentioned that he received a request from the Mercer County Trails Association for funds to cover the difference. Also, we received a request from the City of Hermitage for \$651,600 for the East State Street/Maple Drive/Dutch Lane Intersection Improvement Project.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that SVATS MPO has \$641,250 in 2009 STU funds and \$229,000 has already been set aside for the Trout Island Trail. He mentioned that if both of these requests are approved, this would use up all of the 2009 funding and Hermitage's project would be split funded into 2010. Mr. Gracenin explained the details of both of these projects and stated that we need to allocate the money to projects that are ready to go, and both of these projects are ready to go. He noted that if we do not allocate these dollars, we could potentially lose these dollars because they will not carry over into the next fiscal year. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Brandes to advance both of these projects that have applied for funding as noted above and to fund up to an additional \$65,000 for the Mercer County Trails Association. Mr. Tulip seconded. The motion passed.

### TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Mr. Stewart gave a brief update on the Transportation Enhancement Projects: 1) The **Mercer County Trails Association – Trout Island Trail Project** is ready to go to construction this year and funding has been finalized. 2) PennDOT has let the project for bids for the **Borough of Sharpville Retaining Wall Project – Streetscape Phase V (Walnut Street)**. 3) PennDOT recently informed the City of Sharon that all sidewalk crossings must be ADA compliant. This was not originally anticipated and a field meeting has been scheduled. Also, the right-of-way issues have been resolved for the **City of Sharon 2007 Streetscape Project**.

### PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Stewart explained that the State announced who would receive funds under the Smart Transportation money, which links transportation and land use planning to enhance communities. 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. Mr. Stewart noted that only the Mercer Borough Corridor Study was funded for \$200,000. An RFP will be sent out to consultants soon with work starting within a few months.

## STC HEARINGS DISCUSSION

Mr. Stewart stated that the State Transportation Commission hearings were postponed due to the impasse in the State budget. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that we always give our Coordinating Committee an opportunity to discuss what should be brought before the STC hearings and how we would like to see the funds used. He noted that project based discussions have moved more toward issue based discussions.

Mr. Petit mentioned that they are looking for big visions for the region and not issues. He noted that during the past year, PennDOT has seen \$176M revenue shortfall across the State. News is quite negative as to the future of transportation funding. He mentioned that the PCTI Study in Mercer fits in well with the new priorities for PennDOT, which links transportation and land use planning to enhance communities. He noted that the I-80 tolling will be a big discussion and the MPO needs to decide how to approach this issue. One option could be to advocate for performance driven funding, where funding would be allocated based on the MPO's and District's past success with projects and wise use of funds.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Stewart gave an overview on the Congestion Management Processes Study. He noted that the consultants (Whitman, Requart & Associates) have been moving along quite well and should be done by the end of the year. He mentioned that staff members have been trained to do their local match portion of the work and will be involved this summer in driving the segments that were considered congested corridors in Mercer County and monitor various things over the years. Mr. Gracenin mentioned that in our contract for the CMP Study, the firm will provide GPS software to get time studies. Mr. Petit mentioned ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) and how components such as message signs, command centers, coordinating with emergency providers, etc., can play a role in reducing congestion, improving safety and streamlining travel in general.

Mr. Stewart also mentioned that back in May 2008; the MPO Committee approved the Bylaws that were updated. Since then, it was felt that all voting members should sign the Bylaws.

Mr. Lengel from Findley Township thanked PennDOT for guardrail help on bridges. He still questions why the guardrails cannot be paid for on the approaches to the bridges. Mr. Jeff Dunlap from PennDOT stated that they are not allowed to do this because they are locally owned roads. Mr. Petit stated that he understands Mr. Lengel's complaint, but emphasized they are not legally allowed to spend money unless there is an agility agreement and they may want to look into this.

Mr. Zohoranacky from Mercer Borough asked if there is any program that is available under this organization to learn what money is available and how it all works or could we hold an annual refresher course? Mr. Gracenin welcomed any member to give us a call or stop in the office regarding the operation of the MPO. Mr. Zohoranacky suggested that we hold an annual meeting in February to get a refresher course on how the MPO is run and what programs are available. Mr. Gracenin agreed that this was a good idea.

Mr. Petit also agreed that this was a good idea, but they should also look at how municipalities are dealing with transportation plans and look at their comprehensive plans. Dialogue tends to be project oriented. Planning is the key to figuring out how to allocate dollars.

Ms. Cooper mentioned that there have been many safety issues, this summer, on Route 18 north of Hermitage at Birchwood Road and Thomason Road due to cars having to cross over four lanes of traffic. PennDOT stated that they have been looking at site distances, etc. to see if there are any problems which could be addressed.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel M. Gracenin,  
MPO Secretary