

MINUTES

SHENANGO VALLEY METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING/TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 14, 2007 – 10:30 A.M. - MCRPC Offices
Hermitage, PA

PERSONS PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Daniel Gracenin	MCRPC
Matt Stewart	MCRPC
Pete Longiotti	Greenville Borough
Ryan T. Eggleston	Greenville Borough
Deborah Casadei	PennDOT
Tom Paxton	Pine Township
Bob Lucas	Sharon City
Denise Anthony	Senator Robbins
Charles Garrett	Wilmington Township
Jim Morton	Wolf Creek Township
Kevin McCullough	PennDOT
Kathy Zook	Eastgate Regional COG
Mirta Reyes-Chapman	Eastgate Regional COG
Robert Hannigan	PennDOT
Kristin Egresits	PennDOT
Stephen Theiss	Mercer County Trails Association, Inc.
Parke Wentling	Mercer County Trails Association, Inc.
Barb Brown	Springfield Township
Dick Brandes	Jefferson Township
E. Don Marshall	Hempfield Township
Dave George	West Middlesex Borough
Mark Miller	Mercer County
Chuck Gilliland	Shenango Township
Jeff Dunlap	PennDOT
Frank Gargiulo	Farrell City
Dan Walston	FHWA
Erin Wiley	PennDOT
Mark Longiotti	State Representative
Dick Stevenson	State Representative
Vance Oakes	Grove City Borough
Diane Helbig	Rep. Michele Brooks
Nathan Clark	Concerned Citizen
Don Hall	PennDOT
Fred Hoffman	Sharon City
Phil & Mary Yasnowsky	Interested Citizens
Chris Conti	MCRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gracenin called the meeting to order at 10:34 A.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING MAY 15, 2007

Ms. Gracenin asked for any additions, corrections or deletions to the Minutes of the May 15, 2007 meeting. There was one correction under Other Business; the motion that was made at the May 15, 2007 meeting was to approve moving \$150,000 from the Stoneboro enhancement project to another enhancement project. Mr. Gracenin asked for a motion to approve this correction. Mr. George so moved, Mr. Longiotti seconded. The motion passed.

TIP ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Ms. Kristin Egresits, the new coordinator who will be replacing Mr. Kevin McCullough, presented one TIP administrative action. She stated that PennDOT moved \$50,000 from the McCartney Road Bridge to the Ridge Road Bridge. Mr. Gracenin explained that no action is needed; this is for informational purposes only.

APPROVAL OF AIR QUALITY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Mr. Gracenin explained that this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is a requirement with the State explaining that the Shenango Valley Transportation Study will continue to work as the MPO with PennDOT, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. He stated that this MOA will ensure that as the MPO is developing plans, programs and projects that they are meeting the air quality standards that are set at the Federal level. There being no questions on the MOA, Mr. Gracenin asked for a motion to approve this MOA. Mr. Brandes so moved, Mr. Pete Longiotti seconded. The motion passed.

2007 STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION HEARING

Mr. Gracenin informed those present that the State Transportation Commission Hearing for our area will be held at the Hermitage VFW on August 30, 2007. He explained that anyone that has a specific issue or project relating to the transportation system and would like to speak at this hearing should notify the MCRPC so that we can schedule the speakers in order to not have repetitive speakers. Mr. Gracenin also noted that the preferred method of testimony is electronic submission. State Representative Mark Longiotti stated that he plans to make comments and to please let him know if any comments need to be made on a specific project. Mr. Don Hall from PennDOT stated that they do not particularly want to hear specific projects, but more on issues from those individuals providing testimony at the STC Hearing.

UPDATE ON THE COORDINATED SERVICES PLAN BETWEEN SVSS/WTRA/Niles

Mr. Gracenin explained that a consultant, Charles Nelson from Akron, Ohio was hired to coordinate between the three transit agencies. Since our last meeting, a larger committee was developed to receive input from individuals, county agencies, businesses, etc., to identify needs relating to transit.

The Coordinated Services Plan will identify needs, major projects and priorities. Three public forums in Ohio and PA have been set up during the month of August to receive public input concerning public transportation. Any plan that is developed will include Mercer, Trumbull and Mahoning Counties. Federal funding that comes with the plan will be dispersed to all three counties.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Mr. Gracenin noted that the Transportation Enhancement Projects are moving along, but it is a slow process. He highlighted on a few of the projects.

The **Shenango Valley Bikeway Project** (portion in Hermitage) is moving along. The City is in the process of installing storm water pipe on part of Highland Road. The **Shenango Valley Bikeway Project** (portion in Wheatland/Farrell) was downsized due to running over budget. Sidewalks were completed on Mercer Avenue up to Indiana Avenue under Phase 1 of the project.

The **Trout Island Trail Project** is moving ahead. The Environmental Reviews are done and the Mercer County Trails Association is working on getting the lease signed.

The **State Street Bridge Project** should be completed by 2008 for \$805,000. The 2 bridges along Route 62 (Shenango Valley Freeway) will not be shut down until 2009.

Construction is moving along for the **Grove City Streetscape Project**. The estimated completion date is November 15, 2007.

Phase I of the Greenville Streetscape Project was closed out completely. Documents have been submitted for **Phase II of the Greenville Streetscape Project**.

UPDATE ON COUNTYWIDE GIS PROJECT

Mr. Gracenin explained that the MPO allocated STU funds to a GIS project at the County level to create parcel layer data and to team with some of the other agencies to make the project slightly more cost efficient. An RFP was sent out, 4 consulting firms were interviewed and it was narrowed down to two consulting firms; GeoDecisions and L. Robert Kimball. He noted that one of the two consulting firms would be chosen later today. He noted that all of the bids came in under cost and hopefully have a contract signed and completed within the next 4-6 weeks so work could start sometime in the Fall. They are estimating a 12 month completion time for the parcel conversion and about another 12 month completion time for the 911 portion. He noted that there was one problem regarding the 911 project. The 911 office submitted an application to PEMA to receive funding to do the work, but the application was denied. The reason the application was denied was because there was not an actual cost number in the application. The 911 office will resubmit their application in the spring to PEMA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Gracenin explained that a certification review was performed from Federal Highway and Federal Transit three years ago, which was in coordination with Eastgate and the Niles Transit

Authority. Under the certification review, public participation was an item that Federal Highway felt needed to be improved. They wanted to be sure that we were getting the involvement and allowing the citizens of Mercer County to have a role in the development of our plans and how they select projects. Mr. Gracenin noted that in the next couple of months, the MPO can view sample plans (from Erie County) that outline how to provide opportunity for public input. He stated that we will need to update the public involvement plan within the next several months.

I-80 TOLLING

Mr. Gracenin discussed the I-80 tolling. He noted that a study was prepared by PennDOT which shows what Mercer County's expected allocation would be from the toll revenues that would be generated by I-80. He felt that more revenue should be going to counties that have I-80 running through them instead of being distributed across the Commonwealth. The Mercer County estimated share would be approximately \$4 million to \$4.8 million annually. He felt that this funding split is not fair. He expressed his concerns that there would be potential for traffic to avoid the toll booths and drive onto local streets which would cause the roads to require additional maintenance and cause new congestion related issues for which the allocation would not cover. He felt that the funding formula should be reevaluated. The floor was open for discussion.

Representative Stevenson agreed with Dan's concerns, as well as Representatives Longiotti, Brooks and Senator Robbins. They had voiced their concerns in Harrisburg and part of their concern is the plan is not well drafted in terms of where the toll booths will be located. Also, they have concerns with the funding formula split that is referenced in Act 44. He felt that the MPO Committee should write a letter expressing their concerns over how the tolling of this important roadway will affect Mercer County. Representative Longiotti stated that it would be hard to change the funding formula at this point, but there may be other ways to generate funding to compensate for those problems.

Mr. Gargiulo expressed his concerns that I-80 should not be tolled and stated that he would like to see a stronger letter written explaining that if I-80 is being tolled that all Interstates within the Commonwealth should be tolled.

Mr. Gargiulo then made a motion that there should be opposition to tolling I-80 and to write a letter on behalf the Shenango Valley MPO stating that if we toll I-80, it should be on all interstate highways in the Commonwealth. Mr. Clark stated that he is adamantly opposed to what he calls is a tax. He felt that by tolling I-80, the County will be at an economic disadvantage with other areas of the State that do not have tolls on their Interstate system. Ms. Helbig stated that Representative Brooks could not attend this meeting, and wanted to note that she is against tolling I-80.

Mr. Gracenin noted that there is a motion on the floor and asked for a second. Ms. Brown felt that the motion should address that the plan is inadequate in its funding justifications. Representative Longiotti noted that all of Mercer County's representatives and senator voted no to tolling I-80, but the State already passed legislation and it is now at the Federal level. Mr. Gracenin stated that he will address the letter to the Secretary of Transportation and forward it to the Federal representatives as well as other interested parties. **Mr. Longiotti seconded the motion on the floor.** Mr. McCullough commented about adjusting the formula. Mr. Gracenin stated that he

believes I-80 should not be tolled and believes since I-80 is being tolled that all Interstates within the Commonwealth should also be tolled. He feels the funding formula split is inadequate and should be reviewed. **There being no further questions, the motion on the floor was approved. The motion passed with PennDOT officials abstaining.**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel M. Gracenin,
MPO Secretary