

MINUTES

SHENANGO VALLEY METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING
Tuesday, November 9, 2021 – 10:30 A.M.

PERSONS PRESENT

Dale Perry
Jeremy Coxe
Bob Lark
Melissa Phillips
Ben Prescott
Matt McConnell
Lucinda Lipko
Mary Kay Mattocks
Kim DiCintio
Brian McNulty
Tom McClelland
Courtney Lyle
Kevin McCullough
Brandon Leach
Matthew Crea
Jasson Urey
Richard Stachel
Chuck Weber
Cindy Black
Gary Lowers
Ronnique Bishop
Erin Houston
Sandy Swogger
Shelli Oakes
Travis Siegel
Ron Johnson
Ed Reese
Michael Lamberson
Ashley Tracy
Emily Aloiz
Diane Helbig
Chris Conti
Brian Barnhizer
Matt Stewart
Dan Gracenin

REPRESENTING

Shenango Township
Hermitage City
West Middlesex Borough
Sharon City
Farrell City
Mercer County Commissioner
Springfield Township
Grove City Borough
Mercer County Regional Council of Governments
PennDOT, D-1
PennDOT, D-1
PennDOT, D-1
PennDOT, CPDM
PennDOT, CPDM
PennDOT, CPDM
Greenville Borough
Pine Township
Wolf Creek Township
Wilmington Township
Pymatuning Township
FHWA
Shenango Valley Urban League
Mercer County Area Agency on Aging
State Representative Tim Bonner
Northwest RPO
PennDOT, D-1
GPD Group
PennDOT Mercer County
McCormick Taylor
Erie Area MPO
State Senator Michele Brooks
MCRPC
MCRPC
MCRPC
MCRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jeremy Coxe called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. **A quorum was present.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 10, 2021

Mr. Coxe stated that the Minutes were sent out with the meeting packet and asked if there were any additions, corrections or deletions to the Minutes of the August 10, 2021 meeting. There being none, Mr. Coxe asked for a motion to approve. Ms. DiCinto so moved, Ms. Mattocks seconded. The motion passed.

2021-2024 TIP MODIFICATIONS

Mr. Coxe introduced Brandon Leach from our PennDOT central office. Mr. Leach noted since our last meeting on August 10th there were 15 administrative modifications and no amendments to the 2021 Highway/Bridge TIP. He highlighted a couple of the modifications that were of particular interest. In Modification #1, the Mercer Guiderrail Upgrades 2022 Project was added to the TIP but no amendment was required since this was done using State 581 funds. Modification #2, the State Street Pedestrian Improvements Project had funding removed from the construction phase in FFY 2021 due to let date being moved out to 2023. For Modifications #7-10, final design, utility and right-of-way phases were added to the Ohl Street Bridge Project. The Old Mercer Road Bridge Project preliminary engineering start was moved from FFY 2021 to 2022. The largest chart was for Modifications #11 and 12 and these entailed 5 projects that were cash flow to change Federal funding type to tie up 2021 STP funding.

Mr. Leach highlighted the interstate statewide informational items stating there were a total of 7 administrative modifications and no amendments. Modification #1, the Ohl Street Bridge construction phase was cash flowed from FY 2021 to 2023. This move involved cash flowing Federal, BOF and State 179 funds. Modification #3, the I-80-mile post 0 to 15 patching project was added to the 2021 Interstate TIP. Mr. Leach asked if there were any questions. There being none, he turned the meeting over to Kim DiCintio to cover the transit amendments and modifications.

Ms. DiCintio noted that she has 2 amendments and 1 modification that they are proposing on their Transit TIP. Amendment #1 is a Bus Enhancement that will let us purchase digital monitors to put on the bus, which is called Infotainment System and will enable better communication. Amendment #2 is a training platform for new drivers to utilize and learn how to properly secure a wheelchair on the bus. Modification #1 is the correct amount for the ADA related expenses for FY 2022. There being no questions, it was noted that a motion is needed for the 2 transit amendments. A motion was made by Mr. Stachel to approve the 2 transit amendments. Mr. Lark seconded. The motion passed.

PROPOSAL: "DEEP DIVE" WEB-MEETINGS – LRTP, 2023 TIP, OTHER TOPICS

Mr. Stewart noted that it is imperative that we keep our members informed and up to speed on issues that are very important. In the past, we held some educational sessions that were refresher type classes. Mr. Gracenin suggested that we could have pre-recorded videos that would go over those topics and we can post them on the web or even mail them. Members expressed their opinion and felt having pre-recorded videos available to view would be very helpful. Mr. Stewart stated that they will work on putting pre-recorded videos on the web within the next few months.

2022 SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGET ADOPTION

Mr. Stewart noted that we have these various performance measures that the board will need to adopt or establish their revised safety targets. Today, we will look at the annual update on the safety targets, which are the PM-1 measures. There are 5 categories under the PM-1 measures which are number of fatalities; fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled; number of serious injuries; serious injury rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled; and number of bike/ped crashes. He noted that this is done each year and the MPO must establish targets within 180 days after the State establishes their targets. What we have done in the past and what would be recommend to again today, is agree to plan and program projects in support of the PennDOT targets. The only thing we are required to do is to agree to try to plan and program projects under the PM-1 measures that will support those values and formally get a motion from the

MPO Coordinating Committee. There being no questions, a motion was made by Mr. Stachel to approve the plan and program projects under the PM-1 safety measures in support of the PennDOT targets. Mr. Lark seconded. The motion passed.

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION

Mr. Stewart stated that every 5 years, we update our Long-Range Transportation Plan. A few days ago, we concluded our public comment period and today we will consider this document for adoption by the Coordinating Committee. He spoke briefly about the organization of the LRTP and noted that the first several chapters are background information which describes our transportation system, some demographics, etc. Next, we look at how this plan integrates with our 12-year program, our TIP, prioritization of projects and how we expect to do projects over the next 24 years and then break them into different categories such as highway, bike/ped and local projects, etc. The draft LRTP has been on our website for about a month and noted on page 15, we have a pretty large section on environmental justice. The environmental justice section gives us a much larger focus of our LRTP and there is a lot of very good analysis here. He noted that there is a new section called “Emerging Trends and Disruptors” which outlines changes in transportation from fuels and the way vehicles run to e-commerce and how people travel to telework, and what the implications could be for Mercer County.

There is a section under the transportation system that gives a quick summary of roadways, bridges, transit, aviation, the bike/ped network and the freight network which is a high-level overview of what is going on in Mercer County. There is a section regarding the LRTP Report Card which was set up to monitor our performance measures since 2016. This is in addition to the Federal Performance Measures that we also adhere to and the table outlines whether we met those goals. The transportation plan section outlines project prioritization, funding sources and fiscal constraints, air quality conformity, coordination with environmental agencies, etc. The programming section shows our project listings for highway projects, bike/ped projects, betterments, studies, policies and local projects. Since 2016, roughly 10-12 studies were recommended and finished and there is a list of planning studies that we are hoping to do over the next few years. Finally, there is a section on recommended policies for the MPO, PennDOT, or other entities to consider that would help in making our transportation system better.

Mr. Stewart asked if there were any questions about the Long-Range Transportation Plan. There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Perry to adopt the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Weber seconded. The motion passed.

DRAFT 2023 TIP DISCUSSION

Mr. Stewart reviewed some background information regarding the TIP and noted that Courtney Lyle will go through the projects that we have on our Draft TIP, as it stands right now. He reviewed the Financial Guidance noting that there was a slight decrease of 3% from the last two-year TIP. This will change due to the Federal Transportation bill. Essentially, we would get approximately \$13m/year to fund all of our roads and bridges and often times some bike/ped projects. We also receive some transit dollars, which is fairly consistent. There are other components on the TIP that need to be prepared that are either ongoing or will be starting soon, but will discuss the highway/bridge project listing today. Next, he reviewed the TIP process to date noting that he was able to participate in the general and procedural guidance workgroups and was also able to be on a few subgroups. Once we receive our draft guidance, PennDOT and our office will start thinking about carryover projects on our existing TIP and what might be added to the TIP. He noted that we are using a lot more data to select our safety projects and also how we assess condition of roadways. We are using the performance-based data to justify projects and also look at them through an environmental justice lens.

Ms. Lyle from PennDOT felt that this TIP update has been very successful. She stated under the performance measures, we are able to look at the bridge asset management system and the pavement asset management system to make sure the projects that are being proposed fall within the parameters that they need to in order to meet the performance measures. Next, she went over some line items that track STU funds that MPO awards to projects, as well

as TAU funds. Currently, the Alan Avenue Project is receiving TAU funds, but in 2025, we will be looking for a project to award those funds to. The BOF funds or the Federal Bridge Funds that PennDOT receives will be given to the MPO for local bridges that would cover 80% of the project, 15% of the project will come from State 183 funds and 5% would be the responsibility of the municipality. She noted that they are proposing to add a Countywide Safety Line Item for projects that might be for a low-cost correction in order to improve safety at that spot. PennDOT is looking at adding \$250,000/year of State highway Funds that could be given to some small projects throughout the County that could help with some safety issues. Next, she went over some paving projects. The first project is already in design on Route 18 goes from Route 358 towards Mill Hill Road that goes past Thiel College was awarded \$1 Million in STU funds about a year ago for additional intersection work. This is currently in design and are looking at letting the project in 2023. Another paving project on Route 18 goes from Route 358 towards where the four lanes are and are looking at doing this project in 2022-2023. A third paving project on Route 18 goes from Roman to Wilson. The design will start in 2023 construction to start in 2025. She noted that they are currently in design on two intersection projects. The first is Route 18 and 4006 and the other is Route 18 and 4005. Both projects will go into construction in 2023. There are two different paving projects on Route 19. The first paving project is from Route 358 towards 1011, which is currently in design with a let date in 2024. The second paving project is on Route 19 going towards Carpenters Corner to the Crawford County line. The design work will start in 2023 with construction in 2026. There will be some paving projects on Route 58. One project will start at where the four lane ends and will go towards Oak Street. The design work will start in 2023 with construction starting in 2027. On Route 58 we are going from 2024 towards Route 19. They are looking at letting that one out in the last four years of the TIP in 2031-2034. The next paving project is on Route 58 from the Walmart out towards Campbell that will be let out in the last four years as well. A couple projects will be added from the Long-Range Transportation Plan, that were voted into effect today. They are looking at doing a project at Route 62 and Keel Ridge Road intersection; a project at Route 62/845/1004 intersection and potentially a project at Route 62 and Robertson Road intersection. All three of those are high priorities on the Long-Range Plan. They are looking at adding PE to the TIP for a project on Route 62 that would incorporate the Bessemer and railroad tunnel. They will be adding some signage to the ICS project and will apply for funds and these were added to the TIP as well. They will be looking at some paving work on Route 518 from Route 18 towards Division Street. They are also looking at doing a project on Route 518 that goes from Sharon to Sharpsville. Both of these projects will start in 2023-2024. They have a paving project on Route 718 that will go from West Middlesex Borough to Broadway Avenue with construction in 2023. Then in 2025, they are looking at a paving project on Route 718 from Bank Place to River Road.

There are some large bridge projects that they are planning to do. The first is the bridge over Wolf Creek on Route 58 in Grove City Borough, which will be let in 2023. They are also looking at letting the Route 19 over Johnson Run in 2023. In total, there are five pages of projects that they are looking at adding over the next 12 years, with more to come. We will also need to determine what we are going to be using the local bridge funding on as we move forward. Commissioner McConnell questioned if anyone from Grove City Borough brought up the Route 173 and Lincoln Avenue. The Borough had submitted some plans on that since there is a lot of Industrial area around there. Some emergency work was done on the bridge, and they are looking at improving that intersection. Mr. Stewart noted that this was just brought to our attention last week and this was not mentioned during the Long-Range Plan Update. He noted that a meeting was set up with the Borough and Penn Northwest to discuss the needs they have and timetables. Next, Mr. Perry questioned if the Route 718 paving project from Route 318 to Broadway that is scheduled to be let in 2023 could be moved up since the road is in poor condition. Ms. Lyle stated no, since the 2022 program is locked in place and the funding would not be available until 2023.

DRAFT 2022-2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Mr. Stewart noted that we are working on our biennial work program, which is updated every two years. He stated major changes were made during the previous two updates (2020-2022 and 2018-2020), but this update is less extensive. We will continue to simplify our work tasks, where possible, and continue to tailor to our MPO and the work our MPO staff plans to undertake. There will be areas of greater focus on Environmental Justice, Performance-Based Planning and Programming, as well as the Public Participation Plan and general public outreach as well as some

new planning studies. Some of the key areas of focus were highlighted on a chart that shows some of the major deliverables that will be within the two-year timeframe. He mentioned that our new Long-Range Transportation Plan was just adopted in 2021, and wanted to focus on a few of the potential planning studies that had been recommended through our UPWP. One is the Route 358 Corridor Study, which for years there have been comments regarding the S curves through Clarks Mills, truck access from Greenville Reynolds area, as well as a New Vernon interchange where Route 358 and I-79 intersect. Another potential planning study would be a County-wide Bike/Ped Study where we prioritize projects and develop a plan to pursue funding, and hopefully move a lot of these things forward. The Transit Development Plan is already planned to occur and the MPO could help fund part of this through the UPWP. Mr. Stewart asked if there was any input regarding this item or if anything is missing, that we might want to consider. There were no comments.

PROJECT UPDATE SUMMARY

---Transportation Alternatives and STU Project Status Reports - Mr. Barnhizer gave a few updates on STU and TA projects. The **McKinley Avenue Bridge in Mercer Borough** has a fully executed reimbursement agreement with PennDOT. The maximum amount is \$781,000 with an expiration date of June 30, 2026, so this project will be moving forward. The **Town of Greenville SR 58/18 Intersection Project** will be discussed under major projects, if there are any updates. The **Sharon Gateway Project** engineer is finalizing the gateway sign design and will submit them to PennDOT as well as submitting the traffic signal plans. The construction plans will follow and PennDOT would like to advertise by mid to late December. Lastly, the **Springfield SR 208 Multimodal Path, Phase II** project have a review and comment period that began on October 29 and runs through November 15th if anyone would be interested in making comments, online through a PennDOT website.

---Major Projects/Other TIP Projects – Mr. Johnson mentioned that the **Sharon Gateway Project** moved into final design and received environmental clearance; and the project is moving along well. PennDOT has been working on Phase One archeology for the **PA 18/358 Mill Hill Road project** near Thiel College so they can start moving forward with the environmental clearance through this corridor. Next, he mentioned that PennDOT is working with FHWA to get an extension for the **Ohl Street Bridge Project**.

---Planning and Data Collection Updates – Mr. Barnhizer mentioned that a Request For Proposals went out in July for the US 19 Corridor Safety Study and we received a number of proposals. Proposals were reviewed with the members of the Review Committee and invited two firms to be interviewed in August. TransSystems of Pittsburgh was selected and the contract was executed in September. The consultant began data collection and the first steering committee was held virtually on November 4th. The total project budget is \$30,000 and the Township is providing \$2,500. More steering committees are being scheduled and two public meetings will be held prior to project completion sometime in the Spring of next year. Next, he mentioned that we contract with PennDOT to do an average of 75 traffic counts. This year, we did 72 counts that were completed and submitted. Also, in the next week or so we will get underway with the HPMS field reviews of road segments and we will have those submitted the first week of December.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING UPDATE

---Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside – Mr. Stewart mentioned that there were no applications submitted in Mercer County and there were fewer applications received across the State. In addition to the TASA monies that we compete against in the State for; we also receive our own annual entitlement of Transportation Alternative funding which is called TAU or urban and that is because we are part of the Youngstown Metropolitan Area. This entitlement is \$41,000 per year. Currently, some of this money is tied up in a project, but we have a few years of money that we can decide whether we want to put money to another project. This is money that we need to expend, but unfortunately not enough money to do a whole project.

--Green Light Go – Mr. Stewart mentioned that the Green Light Go Program, Year 7 Funding, is a program that can fund signal improvements because all signals in Pennsylvania are municipally owned. The next funding round is open again and there is \$40M available State-wide and there is a 20% match. Applications will be due in January 2022. He noted that municipalities that have signals received a copy of their version of the Mercer County Traffic Signal Improvement Study. This study gave a very detailed look at all 102 signals in Mercer County and ranked signals against each other and then made specific recommendations on what components should be approved at each intersection. He noted that there are a couple of changes with this Year-7 Funding round. Even though this is PennDOT funding, this is going through DCED's Single Application for Assistance and is a fully electronic submission. One new thing is you are now required to work upfront with a PennDOT D-1 Traffic Signal Unit (Ed Orzechowski) at 814-678-7169 or eorzechowski@pa.gov.

--Federal Infrastructure Funding – Mr. McCullough mentioned that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed by the House and is waiting on a signature from the President. This is roughly for \$1.2 Trillion. Nationally, this is new spending money over a five-year period and it carries forward a lot of the programs that are currently in place. This is good, because that means the money will be available and will go through a formula so we can all take advantage of it a lot faster. There will be some programs that will be new and we will work through those details. Nationally, over the five-years, roads, bridges and major projects get roughly \$110 Billion of this roughly \$1.2 Trillion. Passenger freight and rail would roughly get \$66 Billion and broadband and internet roughly \$65 Billion. There is water infrastructure, such as removing lead from pipes, would roughly get \$55 Billion. Public transit roughly would get \$39.2 Billion and electrical grid improvements at roughly \$73 Billion. Flooding, wildfires and cybersecurity around \$47.2 Billion and electrical vehicle charging stations at about \$7.5 Billion. Airport maintenance and port and waterway improvements about \$25 Billion. Overall, this would reauthorize \$550 Billion in new spending over five-years. Funding for existing programs should be available in early 2022. Central Office and PennDOT will be working with MPOs and RPOs to figure out what additional money we can assume will be on the TIP. They will go over the draft TIP and look at possibly advancing some projects and what the project priorities are and do a little bit of clean up of cash flow.

New programs such as the Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations and the Special Bridge Program will have details developed at the Federal level before the money flows and is called Federal rulemaking; how the money can be spent. When it comes to the special initiative on this Special Bridge Program, it will take a little while before we can start to infuse this money into the program. As for Pennsylvania, we're talking roughly \$4 Billion over the next five-years for roads and bridges. Currently, we were expecting \$9 Billion over the next five-years, which takes it to about \$13 Billion. The bill includes an additional \$12.5 Billion for bridges that will be awarded on a competitive grant basis, which is nationally. It is estimated that the State match, over the five-year period, is nearly \$1 Billion dollars. An analysis will be done to look at the cash flow and see how we can handle this additional money coming in. More details will be forthcoming as we work with the Federal Highway Administration on this.

Mr. McCullough also mentioned that the PA Pathways November Newsletter will be posted in the Chat Box for everyone to read. There are some public meetings going on that are scheduled Statewide and there are several projects on I-80 that might be of interest to Mercer County, but none are in Mercer County. This newsletter is also posted on the PennDOT website or you can sign up for the newsletter to be sent out on a monthly basis.

Commissioner McConnell questioned if there is any direction yet on off system versus the on-system proportion of the bridge funding. Mr. McCullough stated not yet, but there will be more details to come, particularly the new bridge grant program. Ms. Phillips from the City of Sharon questioned if we know if the funding is going directly to the MPOs in the State, or will there be any direct allocation to the municipalities. Mr. McCullough stated that we don't know and will have to work through the details and see how it works out and how the money gets distributed. Ms. Bishop from Federal Highway Administration mentioned that the FHWA will develop information and fact sheets regarding the actual implementation of the provisions and programs contained in the legislation. Once FHWA has this information, we will be able to share it with PennDOT and all the planning partners.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Stachel to adjourn the meeting at 12:14 p.m. Mr. McNulty seconded. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel M. Gracenin,

DMG/ew