

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
March 28, 2016 – 4:30 p.m.
Two Chatham Center • Suite 400 • 112 Washington Place • Pittsburgh, PA 15219

The one hundred nineteenth meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Chuck Anderson.

Members present were: Tony Amadio, Charles Anderson, Kevin Boozel, Scott Bricker, Robert Brooks, Tom Ceraso, Gina Cerilli, Dave Coder, Jack Cohen, Steve Craig, Rich Fitzgerald, Jim Gagliano, Jr., Kim Geyer, Joe Grata, Kelly Gray, Richard Hadley, Ted Kopas, Clifford Levine, Robert Macey, Larry Maggi, Jeff Marshall, Robbie Matesic, Amy McKinney, David Miller, Erin Molchany, Leslie Osche, John Paul (via phone), Mavis Rainey, James Ritzman, Rodney Ruddock, Aurora Sharrard, Michael Silvestri, Archie Trader, and Blair Zimmerman.

Others: Shawn Carter and Grant Ervin, City of Pittsburgh; Jason Rigone, Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Dan Alwine, Kirk Brethauer, Leann Chaney, Chuck Imbrogno, Tom Klevan, Johanna Klotz, Vince Massaro, Shannon O’Connell, Dee Pamplin, Matt Pavlosky, Doug Smith, Kay Tomko, Lew Villotti, Sara Walfoort, and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Anderson called to order the March 28, 2016 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
 - a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded.
 - b. Any Conflict of Interest Declarations on Action Items – None.

2. Action on Minutes of the January 25, 2016 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2016 meeting by Commissioner Coder which was seconded by Erin Molchany. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None.

Chairman Anderson gave recognition to SPC’s previous Chairman Steve Craig by presenting him with a picture of the Lawrence County Courthouse and reading the Recognition Resolution noting his service with SPC as a Lawrence County representative.

4. Financial Report – Vince Massaro

Mr. Massaro reported on the financials for the fiscal period ending January 31, 2016 which includes the approved budget and reflects the operations of the Commission and the Corporation.

Total project related revenues to date are \$7.9M compared to the annual updated budget of \$12.7M. This reflects 62% of the budget recognized and encumbered to date. All federal, local and state funding agreements have been fully executed including the PREP agreement and the EXPORT 2000. Also, the first installment of the 2016 billings to the members for the local match will be mailed April 1.

Total carry-over project related revenues encumbered to date \$160,000 compared to the approved updated budget. This freight planning project will be completed by June 30. Total project expenditures of \$8.1M encumbered and recorded to date versus the approved annual budget of \$12.9M which reflects 62.6% of the budget expended and encumbered to date.

Commissioner Ruddock moved to accept the financial report and Mr. Silvestri seconded. The Commission accepted the financial report as presented.

5. Action on Resolution 5-16 to Enter into a New Five-Year Open-End Master Agreement Covering Future Transportation Planning Activities Performed by SPC – Vince Massaro

Mr. Massaro stated that this is the second five-year agreement offered by PennDOT to SPC for the planning program. This Agreement is PennDOT's current contracting process for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), whereby a planning agency's required UPWP becomes a Work Order within an overall Agreement. The Agreement commences on July 1, 2016 and terminates July 31, 2022, with an option to extend by letter amendment for single or multi-year extensions, but in no event shall the Agreement continue past June 30, 2027.

The total cost under this five-year Agreement, is Thirty Three Million Seven Hundred Thousand dollars (\$33,700,000.00). Once the Agreement is in place, Commonwealth/PennDOT process to review and approve UPWPs and supplemental agreements will allow for significant reduction in the time needed to grant a notice to proceed. SPC is the designated entity pursuant to federal regulations responsible for development and carrying out transportation planning process under Title 23 and Title 49 of the US Code for the area within its jurisdiction.

With this second five-year agreement there is a 34.8% increase in planning funds from federal, state and local resources.

Mr. Macey moved to approve Resolution 5-16 and Commissioner Craig seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Staff Profile – Tom Klevan/Johanna Klotz

Tom Klevan introduced Johanna Klotz, CommuteInfo Outreach Specialist, and the newest member of SPC's CommuteInfo Program. Johanna grew up in Hartford, Connecticut. She has a Masters of Arts in Food Studies from Chatham University and a B.A. in Religion and Creative Writing from Bard College. That education was focused on food systems and food access sustainable agriculture and looking at the way food moves. Taking that education on the road, ended up in the Strip District helping to open Marty's Market. Working at Marty's Market she did a lot of work in sourcing, which helped her to get to know the region. That work turned into outreach and education; getting people to understand what local food and food access is all about. It became clear that skill set was more geared towards the nonprofit sector. In her job at SPC, she talks to people about solutions; about the way people move, and how we can make them move better. Even though her background is not in transportation, we talk about transportation all the time in food so, she felt comfortable coming into this job.

Communicating CommuteInfo's message and goals to multiple audiences means changing the message based on who you're speaking to. Johanna participates in outreach events and creates materials. She has created a carpool card game to help people understand the benefits of carpooling, and is helping manage the CommuteInfo Public Opinion Poll project. Our goal is to get commuters in the ten-county region to choose ridesharing at least two times a week through education and outreach.

7. Action on Resolution 6-16 to Proclaim May as CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month in Southwestern Pennsylvania – Johanna Klotz

We started celebrating CommuteInfo month in 2004. Today I ask the Commission to carry on that tradition and pass Resolution 6-16 to celebrate CommuteInfo again in May.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution 6-16 which was second by Mr. Macey.

Before the final vote Mr. Miller asked SPC staff if there were some statistics on the growth of the CommuteInfo Program over the last couple years. Mr. Klevan responded that there is a monthly CommuteInfo Newsletter that goes out and that statistics are also available on the SPC website. The most common way people interact with the CommuteInfo program is to become part of SPC's ride matching services. Once people become part of this database, we can give them many options on how to share rides. Those numbers continue to go up monthly. Also, the number of vanpools in the region has gone up in the last couple of years, we are above 50 vanpools and we are in the process of forming a new vanpool, which will be on the road in about two weeks.

The affirmative vote to approve Resolution 6-16 was unanimous.

8. Action on Resolution 7-16 to Proclaim May as National Bike Month in Southwestern Pennsylvania – Leann Chaney

Ms. Chaney began by telling the Commission that she brought a Healthy Ride (bikeshare) Bike, which was in the meeting room for them to view. My reason for coming before the Commission this evening is to ask for your support for bicycling by approving Resolution 7-16 to proclaim May as National Bike Month in Southwestern Pennsylvania. It has been sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists for the past 59 years. As part of National Bike Month, the third Friday of May is the National Bike to Work Day; and this year, SPC staff is hosting a staff Bike to Work Day. The third week of May is Bike to Work Week. These events are all encompassed in National Bike Month.

A motion was made by Mr. Macey to approve Resolution 7-16 which was seconded by Commissioner Kopas. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

9. TIP Status Report – Doug Smith

Mr. Smith indicated that as SPC staff continues to do outreach related to the TIP and the Plan, we've had questions about how this work relates to the Allegheny Conference discussions about regional transportation funding. With so many new Commissioners, we wanted to clarify some things so everyone understands the difference between what SPC is doing and what Allegheny Conference is doing. As an example, there was a recent article in Pittsburgh Today that talked about a constrained vision for the Long Range Plan. There are copies of the Plan on the tables for reference. Mr. Smith explained that the vision contained in the Plan is not constrained, but the funding to implement that vision is constrained. We are actively pursuing additional funding for the region. As the MPO for the region, SPC is tasked with putting together and maintaining the region's Long Range Transportation Plan, which covers all state and federal funding that can reasonably be expected to be available. The Allegheny Conference's initiative is separate from that Plan. Whatever comes out of their initiative and whatever they identify in terms of new revenue to advance projects will ultimately come before this Commission to be integrated into the official Long Range Plan for the region.

At SPC we are committed to being good stewards of the public money that comes into the region. We are constantly tracking every project going on in the region and shifting funds to make sure we take full

advantage of all the funds coming into the region so we're maximizing them and using them efficiently. We're also actively pursuing additional funding to deliver the Plan's vision.

A big part of that effort involves a broad based public engagement process to generate discussion. We put a great deal of time and effort into that part of our planning program. In recent years, SPC has received national awards for our public involvement process. We have been doing it for a long time; and, we are always looking for ways to do better. Presenting a slide from last year, Mr. Smith said we got over 2,000 pieces of input for the Long Range Plan and the TIP from this public engagement mechanism that we implemented along with PennDOT and the State Transportation Commission. The input was not limited to fixing bridges and patching potholes. We got a lot of input on a variety of needs around the region. And that is just one mechanism for public input. We have also had extensive input from human services transportation providers. Through our work on the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan, we've received over 400 responses on the topic of transportation for people with disabilities and low income communities alone.

In May, we'll continue this dialogue as we finalize the 2017-2020 TIP. Matt Pavlosky will be contacting you soon about the PPP meetings coming up throughout the region.

To put the Plan and the TIP together we are constantly using data and metrics to track the performance of the transportation system and gauge how we are doing. We continually update our techniques because the data sources emerge so quickly and there is so much more data available now than even just a few years ago. We now have sources of travel data for every hour of the day and every day of the week giving us much more insight into regional travel patterns.

One example of an application of new data is in a regional park-n-ride study that we're doing. We will be using aggregated cell phone data to help with origin and destination information related to park-n-ride lots to see where people are coming and going using those lots. This data will allow us to analyze the effectiveness of various park-n-ride lots and determine what makes a good park-n-ride. It should also give us valuable information for updating our regional travel models.

Tracking performance measures is not just about looking at what additional revenue can do for us. It also helps us to see where there may be other policy actions that could be taken that could have just as big an impact. For example, looking at one of the places in the world that has had really great success at reducing traffic fatalities (Australia), you will see that their reductions had as much to do with policy changes and other efforts as they did with infrastructure investment.

So, going forward, we also have to be looking at things like allowing local police to use radar for speed enforcement (we're the only state in the country that doesn't allow that), a primary seatbelt law, automated speed enforcement in work zones, and other techniques that could help us achieve the performance numbers that we're striving for. Our "boots on the ground" incident management work with first responders has really helped us gain direct knowledge of what is needed in this area.

On the revenue side, as the Plan suggests, we welcome efforts at improving transportation funding for all projects that are consistent with the vision, policies and intent of the region's officially adopted long-range plan.

We see our role as the MPO as not advocating one way or the other for efforts to raise money through additional user fees and taxes, but we are supportive of the efforts to have that discussion.

The Commission urged the state to address revenue when Act 89 was being developed, and a significant chunk of the funding gap was filled with Act 89 revenue enhancements. One issue that is critically

important is making sure that the revenue intended to go to transportation from Act 89 gets through. As you are probably aware, the amount of the State Police budget that comes from the Motor License Fund has been growing and is projected to continue growing. The Motor License Fund is also a main source of transportation funding. It's unquestioned that the State Police budget needs to be funded adequately and in a predictable way, but so does the transportation budget. The Commonwealth needs to continue to look for ways to provide adequate and reliable funding for the State Police so the Motor License Fund money from Act 89 can be restored to transportation projects.

- Since our last Commission meeting we've gotten the numbers on the Interstate Maintenance Program for the Draft TIP, which adds another \$455.5M to the base formula funding we receive, so that is a welcome addition.
- Also since our last Commission meeting, we had an opportunity to sit down with PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards and express your concerns about the allocation of statewide discretionary funding and to present her with a list of candidate projects for additional consideration – we haven't had a response back yet from that meeting, but we are optimistic.
- We are encouraged to see the progress that Allegheny County is beginning to make by enacting the \$5 registration fee allowed by Act 89 at the County level (matching federal funds, paving, etc.), and we're sure that Westmoreland and Greene Counties are going to be able to make additional progress now that they've passed it in their Counties as well.
- SPC staff is actively participating in the planning for BRT between Downtown and Oakland and we look forward to assisting the City if they decide to apply for potential FTA Small Starts funding once that planning is complete.
- We are actively working with PennDOT to pursue funding from a new program out of the FAST Act called FASTLANE, which you'll hear more about in a few minutes.
- We are also working with the City of Pittsburgh to support their SmartCities application, which as we mentioned at the last Commission meeting (and you've probably seen in the news a lot lately) has the potential to bring another \$50M+ into the region.

One of the reasons we are really excited about Pittsburgh being a finalist in the SmartCities application is because it focuses on the future. We want to make sure we are looking forward and not backward.

Also, a big part of the focus in our planning is on the long-term sustainability of these transportation systems. If you look around the country at some of the major projects that are going on and you look at the rapid advancement of technology, particularly with connected and autonomous vehicles, you have to question: "What really are the right types of investment we should be making for the future?"

One funding opportunity that was just announced coming out of the FAST Act is called the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ATCMTD) grant program, which sets aside \$60M per year for large scale deployments of advanced transportation technologies in different parts of the country. We actually have a meeting about this tomorrow, where we'll be looking to position ourselves to pursue these types of projects whether Pittsburgh is successful in being awarded the Smart City Challenge or not.

We have some unique technology resources in this region (Google, Uber, CMU, etc.), and it's important to our regional economy that we embrace these opportunities as we look toward transportation of the future.

10. Action on Resolution 8-16 to Endorse PennDOT's application for USDOT FASTLANE Funding – Doug Smith

As I mentioned, one of the new funding opportunities that we are actively pursuing is called “Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies”, or FASTLANE, and it’s a competitive national program out of the FAST Act targeted at freight movement.

FASTLANE grants provide funding for projects of national or regional significance, primarily targeted at major issues facing our nation’s highways and bridges. It’s not an insignificant amount of money. Congress has authorized \$4.5 billion for this through 2020.

We feel that Pennsylvania is in good position to compete for this funding given our position in the national freight network and our connection to three major regions of the United States.

The immediate challenge for us is that they just rolled out the applications for the first round of funding (\$800M nationwide in FY2016) and the deadlines are pretty tight. Applications are due April 14th and they are pretty extensive, including a detailed Benefit-Cost Analysis. There are two categories of projects:

- About 10% of the money (\$76M) is set aside for “Small” projects; and,
- The other \$724M is set aside for “Large” projects.

“Large” projects have to be over \$100M and they have to be able to go to construction within 18 months once the funding is obligated, so the likelihood is that there’s going to be a huge amount of competition for that 10% set-aside for small projects. It also means that we have to be creative with how we package candidates, because you generally can’t start a major regional project of \$100M or more and have it ready to go to construction in 18 months, so that means projects that you apply for in the early years of this program are going to need to already be in the pipeline.

Over the past two weeks we’ve been in discussions with PennDOT and with the County Planning Departments through the TTC about identifying regional projects that might be candidates for the early rounds of this program. We’re using this input to start developing a multi-year strategy to pursue this funding.

Resolution 8-16 was put together in concert with PennDOT related to the I-376 Banksville Interchange bottleneck. The Interchange is important in terms of access to the city, to the airport, and it’s an important bottleneck in terms of the regional freight network. PennDOT District-11 is working on a project to redesign this Interchange. SPC has put regional CMAQ Funds and federal and state highway funds into the design and utility phases of the project. But, additional construction funds will be needed to make this project happen. We are asking the Commission to take action to help endorse this project and endorse PennDOT applying for this FASTLANE funding.

Mr. Miller asked for more information on what the options are relative to the I-376 Banksville Interchange Project. Mr. Smith summarized the project description saying that the project will address congestion and safety issues by eliminating weaving on Eastbound I-376 with the Banksville Interchange and by improving the merge diverge and weaving movements on the ramps from Route 51 to I-376. A new ramp connection will eliminate the existing weave. A median barrier will separate traffic on Banksville Road traveling to I-376 from those heading to Route 51.

Mr. Ritzman commented that the original thought was to put a third lane through the Fort Pitt Tunnel which was not affordable. PennDOT planning came to this solution using a less costly way by using ramp construction to make it work. Getting this FASTLANE funding we could move forward.

Mr. Miller commented that there was a previous effort of trying to reduce the amount of traffic coming onto the Parkway from Braddock/Wilksburg exchange. That generated issues with the municipalities in Allegheny County that the municipalities closer to the City would be affected by restricting their access to the Parkway. Mr. Smith indicated that that is referred to as ramp metering, and he was not aware of ramp metering being proposed as part of the Banksville Interchange project.

Mr. Becker asked if there were any other projects in the running, and how this project got to the top. Mr. Smith said there are two other projects that PennDOT will be submitting from Eastern Pennsylvania. Mr. Ritzman responded that any state DOT is allowed to submit three projects total so we are submitting the maximum including the SPC region project.

Commissioner Craig made a motion to approve Resolution 8-16 and Commissioner Amadio seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

11. Committee Reports – None

12. Other Business/Announcements – Jim Hassinger

For the Commissioners we will be scheduling public comment on the TIP starting May 4th and ending June 3rd. Contact Matt Pavlosky with any special requests relating to public meetings and locations. We are also doing orientation meetings for Commission members. We have been to Armstrong and Butler and we meet with Beaver County this Friday.

Mr. Levine commented on Johanna Klotz's background in food supply; because one of the things we discussed in our Regional Plan was how to mix the local farms with population centers. Also, I think we could be doing some innovative things like having Farmer's Markets at commuter centers, at park-n-rides, and market surveys and having some interaction. I would be curious to see if we could take advantage of Johanna's background to connect different areas of our region. There could be a lot of creativity that doesn't cost a lot of money.

Dr. Hassinger agreed and noted there are some things already underway in the Planning and Development Department with Laura Mundell working with groups in the region on more utilization of local food networks. The focus is on sustainability and development of the food industry and a resiliency in the region by better connecting food producers in the region and with consumers and retail businesses.

Next Meeting Date – June 27th at 4:30 p.m.

13. New Business - None

14. Adjourn

Commissioner Kopas moved to adjourn the meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and Mr. Silvestri seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted

Rich Fitzgerald
Secretary-Treasurer