

Meeting Minutes for November 19th 2009
Transportation Technical Committee Meeting
Regional Enterprise Tower - Pittsburgh, PA

Attendees:

- Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County Economic Development
- Steve Shanley, Allegheny County Department of Public Works
- Darin Alviano, Armstrong County Planning Commission
- James Camp, Beaver County Department of Public Works
- Tammy Frank, Beaver County Liquid Fuels Manager
- Joel MacKay, Butler County Planning Commission
- Arthur Cappella, Fayette County Planning Commission
- Kevin Gray, Greene County Planning Commission
- Jeff Raykes, Indiana County Office of Planning and Development
- Jeffrey Leithauser, Washington County Planning Commission
- John Surmacz, Westmoreland County Planning Department
- Chris Bova, Westmoreland County Planning Department
- Patrick Hassett, Pittsburgh Department of Public Works
- Patrick Roberts, Pittsburgh Department of Planning
- Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office
- Henry Droughter, FHWA
- Matt Smoker, FHWA
- Dave Cook, PennDOT District 10-0
- Kathy Reeger, PennDOT District 10-0
- Jeff Skalican, PennDOT District 11-0
- Stephanie Spang, PennDOT District 11-0
- Stacey Rabatin, PennDOT District 12-0
- Adam Smith, PennDOT District 12-0
- Ryan Cavallo, PennDOT District 12-0
- Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
- Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Management Association
- Mavis Rainey, Oakland Transportation Management Association
- Sidney Kaikai, Kimball
- Todd Wilson, CMU Student
- Christine Peters, CMU Student
- Gabriella Briffa, CMU Student
- Chuck DiPietro, SPC Staff
- Chuck Imbrogno, SPC Staff
- Tom Klevan, SPC Staff
- Sara Walfoort, SPC Staff
- Domenic D'Andrea, SPC Staff
- Karen Franks, SPC Staff
- Matt Pavlosky, SPC Staff
- Ryan Gordon, SPC Staff
- (Indicates Voting Member)

1. September 17, 2009 TTC Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)

Chuck DiPietro called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Chuck asked everyone to introduce themselves. The October 15th 2009 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

2. Public Comment

Three civil engineering students from Carnegie Mellon University were in attendance to ask for information regarding the Hulton Bridge project. Chuck DiPietro responded with a brief overview of the Hulton Bridge project and the fact that construction of the \$60 million project is currently not on the TIP due to lack of funds, but that the Hulton Bridge is still a priority project for the region. The students will be given contact information for project managers at PennDOT District 11-0 to pursue more detailed information about the design options and engineering of the Hulton Bridge.

3. FHWA/PENNDOT Central Office Reports

a.) Status of SAFETEA-LU Extension

Matt Smoker discussed the current SAFETEA-LU continuing resolution, which will extend the SAFETEA-LU funding at 2009 levels until mid December. This is the second continuing resolution to extend SAFETEA-LU at 2009 levels. Matt anticipates that we will continue on with a number of continuing resolutions since a new transportation bill is not anticipated to be passed prior to the November elections. Matt emphasized that if continuing resolutions last the remainder of the fiscal year it could reduce statewide funding levels by 25 percent.

Chuck DiPietro asked if Matt had any information on the possibility of another round of ARRA stimulus funds. Matt stated that it may depend on the unemployment rate; if the unemployment rate remains over ten percent a stimulus becomes more probable. Matt concluded, however, that there have been discussions involving U.S. DOT that there may be other sectors more able to add jobs quickly.

Matt Smoker discussed briefly some upcoming personnel reorganization at the Pennsylvania Division of FHWA merging the planning and environmental personnel.

b.) Draft Interstate Management TIP (Attachment B)

Kevin McCullough stated that the Statewide Interstate Maintenance TIP program of projects is organized and managed out of Central Office. Kevin stated that the first draft of the Interstate Maintenance TIP has been released and the Districts are in the process of

(Attachment A)

reviewing it and providing Central Office with comments. Kevin noted there have been some revisions already, including one in District 12-0. Adam Smith briefly explained the change which pertained to the Bentleyville Interchange on I-70. Kevin noted that requests for funds from the Interstate Maintenance program greatly exceeded available revenue.

c.) Interstate 80 Tolling (Attachment C and Handout 1)

Kevin McCullough reported that a new application from the Turnpike Commission to U.S. DOT has been submitted to toll Interstate 80. This is the second time the application has been submitted and this application includes responses to the questions raised by U.S. DOT regarding the initial submission last year.

Kevin briefly reviewed the reduction of funding for the draft TIP that would result if the tolling of I-80 is not approved. The financial guidance for the development of this draft 2011 TIP did not include the revenue from the tolling of I-80 (Act 44 funding), which is negatively affecting this TIP update. Kevin stated that the outcome of the application and the timeline for acceptance/rejection are both unknowns. At this time, the Districts and MPOs are moving ahead with their work on TIP update under the current fiscal guidance without I-80 tolling Act 44 funding. Kevin noted that if the tolling of I-80 is approved it will require revisiting all aspects of the preliminary draft TIP to reflect the additional Act 44 funds (both changes are by year and by funding category). Kevin made the point that while this is a significant amount of money, it is not really a source of new funds because it only replaces the Act 44 funds that were cut from the financial guidance so it is not an overall net gain in terms of TIP funds. Chuck DiPietro also emphasized this point stating that the financial projections in the fiscal guidance for this TIP update were cut significantly and the estimated \$232 million in Act 44 funds to the region will not quite return us to the level of the current TIP.

Chuck DiPietro reviewed Handout 1, which presents the total Act 44 allocations by District assuming I-80 tolling. Since partial Act 44 funds are already in the financial guidance numbers for the TIP update, the figures shown in Handout 1 must be reduced by the financial guidance partial Act 44 funds. The total amount estimated to come to the region if I-80 is tolled is the difference, or \$232 million.

d.) Fourth Quarter Progress Report (Handout 2)

Kevin McCullough reviewed Handout 2: the FFY 2009 Fourth Quarter Progress Report. The region reached 103 percent of its target (versus 94 percent statewide). Kevin noted that there were some significant lettings of projects with ARRA or Act 44 funds that occurred just after the end of October, which explains why the actual numbers differ from

the target. Kevin offered that if anyone would like a more detailed project level review of the fourth quarter report, it can be provided. Matt Smoker noted that 55% of the projects originally programmed on the STIP for 2009 were advanced in Fiscal year 2009.

e.) Linking Planning and NEPA Update (Handout 3)

Chuck DiPietro briefly reviewed the status of the ongoing PennDOT statewide initiatives on project development process and linking planning and NEPA. The PennDOT presentation at the annual planning partners meeting raised significant questions/concerns from the MPO/RPOs around the state. Two forums have been scheduled in December between MPO/RPOs and PennDOT to work on these issues and decide how to proceed.

f.) SRTS non-infrastructure “mini-grants”

Chuck DiPietro reviewed Attachment D, which was a press release announcing the 30 schools that received Safe Routes to School grants. The grants are for \$5,000 to promote the Federal Safe Routes to School programs in five focus areas of Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Engineering. Grants were awarded in Beaver County, Indiana County, and Washington County. Chuck noted the grants include a walkability audit by FHWA experts. Kevin McCullough noted that these grants are the educational component of the grants, which also included funding for transportation infrastructure improvements that were previously announced.

g.) Other

Lynn Heckman asked Matt Smoker if the announcements of the U.S. DOT TIGER grants had been made. Matt Smoker reviewed the status of the \$1.5 billion U.S. DOT discretionary funding source called TIGER grants. The grant program funds will be distributed at the discretion of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and was established as part of the ARRA. The application deadline was mid-September and the U.S. DOT is currently processing and reviewing the applications received. Matt stated that the announcement of the grant award winners is not expected until mid-February, however some announcements have been made related to railroad grants, which is a separate part of ARRA. Chuck DiPietro stated that a list of the applications submitted from PA was included in last month’s TTC agenda packet.

4. Action on Amendments and Modifications to the 2009 to 2012 TIP

The current administrative action and amendment procedures are attached following these meeting

minutes.

a.) PennDOT District 10-0 (**Attachment E**)

Dave Cook of PennDOT District 10-0 pointed to the amendment requests and administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 10-0 had one amendment request this month:

- Freeport Bridge Ramps – adjustments to accommodate a construction cost increase due to a variety of items.

Dave also reviewed one of the administrative actions that involved moving ARRA surplus funds into the Heshbon Bridge project.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 10-0 amendment request to the TIP.

b.) PennDOT District 11-0 (**Attachment F and District Handout**)

Stephanie Spang of PennDOT District 11-0 pointed to the amendment requests and administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 11-0 had no amendment requests. Stephanie reviewed one of the administrative actions:

- A portion of the work on Etna Phase 5 will be highway work and funded with highway funds, therefore, \$14 million in bridge funds will be replaced with \$14 million in highway funds. The bridge funds will go back into a statewide line item.

Kevin McCullough added that the bridge funds were from the additional obligation authority granted through the Oberstar initiatives and these funds are only good on designated bridges so the \$14 million in bridge funds is going into a statewide line item for use in other designated bridges in PA.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 11-0 administrative action requests to the TIP.

c.) PennDOT District 12-0 (**Attachment G**)

Adam Smith of PennDOT District 12-0 pointed to the amendment requests and

administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 12-0 had one amendment request this month. Adam reviewed the amendment request:

- Transfer of unobligated funds (\$2.4 million) from the Donora-Monesson Bridge to the SR 2064 Bridge project in Lycoming County (District 3). The source of the bridge funds was the additional obligation authority granted through the Oberstar initiatives and these funds are only good on designated bridges.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 12-0 amendment request to the TIP.

5. Advance 2011-2014 TIP Update

a.) STC Public Hearing for SPC Region (handout)

Chuck DiPietro referred everyone to the agenda from the November 5th STC hearings, which was a handout at the meeting.

b.) Recap of Second Round of TIP Update Work Sessions

Chuck DiPietro provided a brief review of the second round of TIP work sessions noting that there was a lot of individual outreach on the part of the Districts to the SPC member planning departments. There has been excellent participation in the process by PennDOT, the county planning departments and some PPP members. Chuck asked each District to briefly comment on the status of the TIP development to date:

District 10-0: Dave Cook summarized the TIP as a carry-over TIP that they could not carry everything they wanted due to funding constraints that at this point has resulted in some project and phase deferrals. The working version of the TIP under development is balanced and progressing with further fine tuning in terms of adding in more PE phases, adjusting for CMAQ recommendations, and some flexing from highway to bridge funds.

District 11-0: Rob Miskanic has held individual work sessions with the counties and City of Pittsburgh, which has resulted in a working version that at this time is balanced, but very lean and requires some additional fine tuning to get the year by year balance. Chuck DiPietro noted that he expects the Port Authority to be represented at the next TIP work session.

District 12-0: Stacey Rabatin stated that the working version of the draft TIP is balanced, but at this point in the development there are a lot of major projects that

(Attachment A)

are cash flowed out too far. It is an ongoing struggle to work in a local bridge line item and other local projects. Stacey stated that they are also trying to add in some PE phases for future projects so that there are projects that are ready to go if more funding comes available.

Kevin McCullough added that a lack of PE phases is a concern because it hurts long-term project development by creating a workload and timing gap where no projects may be ready to go to construction. Chuck DiPietro stated that a particular challenge right now with the District 12-0 portion of the TIP is the closure on the local projects particularly in Westmoreland County. Chuck stated that the second work session was productive in the sense that it led to a consensus that a meeting at the highest levels with the Westmoreland County Planning Director and the District Executive is required.

c.) Third Round of TIP Update Work Sessions Scheduled

Chuck DiPietro suggested the following activities as we begin to design the third round of District work sessions including:

- CMAQ Committee project selections and associated ramifications to the working TIPs in each District.
- Spike candidate discussions/input into suggested priority list
- Act 44 final funding level and Tolling of I-80 update and related project discussions
- Final individual planning department input and closure
- Revisit/Refine year-by-year and fund type balancing

Chuck reviewed the schedule for the third round of TIP work sessions.

PennDOT District 10-0:
Wednesday, December 9th 10:00 am at District offices in Indiana

PennDOT District 11-0:
Tuesday, December 8th 9:30 am at District offices in Bridgeville

PennDOT District 12-0:
Tuesday, December 15th 9:30 am at District offices in Uniontown

d.) Screen of Potential Spike Candidates (Attachment H)

Chuck DiPietro stated that the region wants to aggressively go after spike funds. Chuck

(Attachment A)

stated that we should utilize the three District Executives and Kevin McCullough as our messengers in stating the regions' priorities for spike funding. Chuck referred to Attachment H; a listing of a few projects that might make good spike candidates. Chuck hopes this list will generate discussions about what projects would be good candidates for spike funding and what the priorities for spike funding are in the region. The list itself has no status with Central Office, but should help organize priorities and should be revisited in the third round of District work sessions.

Kevin McCullough stated that Central Office will be reviewing projects that have received spike funds in the past, but there is no guarantee that these projects will receive spike funding this round. Kevin believes that the focus of the spike funds, as it was last TIP update, will be bridges, although highway projects will also be considered. Kevin stated that generally the region's priorities need to be cut back to better reflect limited funds that may be available.

Lynn Heckman asked if there is a similar list being developed for the transit spike funding. Tom Klevan responded that a list of the spike candidates usually emerges from the PennDOT Bureau of Mass Transit, but it is yet to be released.

e.) Public Involvement/PPP activities

Matt Pavlosky reviewed the participation of the PPP chairs in the second round of TIP work sessions. Matt also reported that SPC held an educational webinar on Monday November 9th that provided a review of the "state of the region," recap of the STC hearing, and provided information on the TIP process. Matt stated that the webinar is still available on the SPC TIP webpage and has been shown in the PPP sessions. The webinars and website are new initiatives to provide greater levels of education to the PPPs and the public earlier in the TIP process. Future webinars may focus on areas of frequently asked questions. Matt stated that he really appreciates the involvement of the individual PennDOT Districts and the SPC member planning departments in the PPP sessions to date. The public really appreciates the access to their expertise at these sessions.

f.) CMAQ Status Report (Handout)

Chuck Imbrogno reviewed the status of the draft CMAQ program development. The deadline to submit applications for new candidate projects for CMAQ funds was October 5th. SPC received 53 applications for new candidate projects with a total request of \$131.9 million. There have been three meetings of the CMAQ evaluation committee and two more are scheduled. Chuck Imbrogno reviewed a series of detailed tables

(Attachment A)

illustrating a summary of the new projects by the four designated priority types, and the current ancillary score rankings of the new projects. Chuck noted some adjustments in the project list since last TTC meeting. Chuck Imbrogno reported that SPC staff is in the process of calculating the impact on air quality for each of the new candidate CMAQ projects. Then the ancillary score rankings and the air quality rankings will be combined into a composite ranking for the new candidates. The carry-over CMAQ projects and the prioritized list of CMAQ candidates will be considered by the CMAQ Evaluation Committee, which is scheduled to finalize its recommended CMAQ program for 2011-2014 TIP at its December 7th meeting.

Lynn Heckman stated that there are still a lot of unknowns because of the influence of the air quality benefit score. Chuck Imbrogno added that the air quality scoring is not known at this time and that it constitutes 50 percent of the final composite score. Kevin McCullough stated that commitments have been made to the carry-over projects from 2009-2010 and that unless they have major problems they cannot be denied from receiving CMAQ funds. After the carryover projects have been accounted for, the new candidate priority ranking list will be utilized to select projects with remaining CMAQ funds. Kevin noted that the top priority projects will be slotted in the year determined by the CMAQ Evaluation Committee. Jeff Raykes stated that the application was set up to collect relevant information from the sponsor about the timing of the project. Chuck Imbrogno agreed, stating that a lot of improvements have been made in the CMAQ application to determine what year they will be ready to go to construction. Kevin McCullough stated that the process for selecting CMAQ projects and managing the CMAQ program are much improved.

Chuck DiPietro stated that it is critical that the recommended CMAQ program is available from the CMAQ Evaluation Committee after the December 7th meeting, he added that Chuck Imbrogno and his staff may require updated costs and schedules on the PennDOT projects in order to close on the dollar level of carryover projects.

g.) Revisit TIP Amendment Procedures

Chuck DiPietro suggested that it is not too early to start a review of the current TIP amendment procedures and provide input on what changes may be necessary for adoption of the 2011-2014 TIP. Chuck directed particular attention to the dollar thresholds that distinguish an administrative action from an amendment and the threshold that requires Commission approval and a 30-day comment period. Karen Franks noted that only three amendments this past year required Commission approval. Tom Klevan noted that the dollar level of the project is not always a direct correlation to the importance of the project especially considering transit projects outside of Allegheny County. Chuck also pointed to the current procedures that have different dollar thresholds for transit and highway amendment requests. He suggested we revisit this point.

Chuck DiPietro asked if there were any changes under discussion with regards to the current statewide amendment procedures agreed to by FHWA and PennDOT. Chuck added that any changes to SPC's amendment procedures should be consistent with these statewide procedures. Matt Smoker responded that there were only minor word changes to the statewide procedures that are also currently being revisited. Matt stated that he believes SPC is the only MPO that has a mandatory 30-day comment period for amendments that require Commission approval. Chuck suggested that this is another area of the current amendment procedures that we should closely revisit. Matt stated that SPC may want to consider a possible exemption of this in extraordinary cases at the discretion of the transportation director or CEO.

6. Transit Operators Committee

Tom Klevan reviewed the proceedings of the Transit Operators Committee on November 18th. Tom stated that the transit TIP update is proceeding and will also have a preliminary draft submitted on December 31st. Tom is scheduling outreach meetings with all the transit operators to review their projects on the transit TIP. Chuck DiPietro asked if the SPC member planning departments would like to participate in the review sessions with the individual transit operators. Tom stated he thought that would be a good idea for the remaining meetings and he will invite the SPC member planning departments to attend. Tom noted that the Port Authority is especially faced with some difficult decisions, similar to PennDOT, on what projects to defer and which projects to carryover.

Tom stated that the TOC decided to spend the federally required one percent set aside suballocation for transit enhancements on the marketing for the Regional Smart Card. Tom noted that this was a significant move for the regional transit operators to collectively support the marketing of the Regional Smart Card. From the beginning of the Smart Card Project, it was acknowledged that a significant part of the project would be marketing and education on the new smart card.

The TOC also had a presentation on the Port Authority's Connect 09 recommendations and 24-month implementation. Chuck DiPietro stated that the 20 minute presentation may be something that would be of interest to the TTC in a future meeting. The TTC members agreed. The next TTC is scheduled for December 10th at 10:00 AM.

Attachment: Current TTC administrative action and amendment procedures

For general information purposes, SPC is using the following administrative action and amendment procedures:

Administrative Actions

To be considered as an administrative action a proposed change must meet the following criteria:

- Exempt from air quality testing
- Does not add or delete an existing project
- No significant change in project scope or design concept
- Maintains overall and year-to-year fiscal balance

Administrative actions may include any of the following types of changes:

- Adds a project for emergency relief purposes except those involving substantial, functional, location, or capacity changes
- Correction of a misprint or data entry error
- Addition or correction of local match funds
- Schedule change, for projects or phases in any of the first three years of the TIP
- Incidental ROW changes
- Change in the funding source
- Exempt projects

New or Deleted Phase

The technical committee can approve an administrative action to add a new phase or delete a phase if the phase cost is \$5 million or less for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project.

Line Items

The recognition/programming on the TIP of specific projects within an approved line item (i.e., betterments, rail-highway crossings, Transit Section 5310 Program, transportation enhancements, local bridges, etc.) is an administrative action as long as the line item is reduced by the same amount as the eligible project. Line item-based actions require technical committee

approval.

For a betterment line item or a rail-highway crossing line item there are no restrictions based on project cost; identification of projects of any amount can be considered as an administrative action. It is also permitted as an administrative action to remove funding from a “line item” project (betterment or rail-highway only) as long as the funds are returned to the respective line item.

Cost Changes

Changes in the cost of a project or project phase can be handled as an administrative action if the cost change is \$5 million or less. A project sponsor is permitted to make an administrative cost change \$1 million or less by reporting the change to the technical committee for informational purposes only. The technical committee must approve a cost change greater than \$1 million but less than \$5 million for a highway project. The action becomes effective when it is forwarded by the technical committee to PennDOT and FHWA or FTA.

Administrative actions do not require Federal approval but FHWA and FTA reserve the right to disallow an administrative action if it is not consistent with federal regulations or the MOU. The project sponsor must provide full documentation prior to SPC acceptance of the requested change and reflecting it on the TIP. SPC and PennDOT will work cooperatively to address and respond to any FHWA and/or FTA comments on these actions.

TIP Amendments

Any project change that cannot be processed within the rules governing administrative actions must be handled as a TIP amendment. A proposed change must be considered as a TIP amendment if it meets any of the following criteria:

- Affects air quality conformity (regardless of funding source)
- Adds or deletes a project (regardless of project cost, except for existing approved line item changes that are considered administrative actions)
- Adds a new project phase or deletes a phase that exceeds \$5 million for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project
- Creates a new line item
- Involves a major change in the project scope of work or design concept
- Changes the project selection status

New or Deleted Project

The technical committee can approve an amendment to add a new project or delete an existing project if the total cost change is \$10 million or less. Total cost changes that exceed \$10 million for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project require approval by the Commission.

Cost Changes

For changes in the cost of an already approved project or project phase, the dollar level of the change will determine the procedures that are required for approval. Changes of \$5 million or less are administrative actions. Changes that exceed \$5 million are amendments. Cost changes of \$10 million or less can be approved by the technical committee. Changes that exceed \$10 million require approval by the Commission.

Air Quality

Amendments with an air quality impact require air quality testing and a 30-day public comment period including a public meeting before they can be presented to the Commission.

Major Fiscal Impact

Amendments with a fiscal impact that exceeds \$10 million are subject to a 30-day public comment period before they can be presented to the Commission.