

Meeting Minutes for June 17th, 2010
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 Public Works
Tammy Frank, Beaver County Liquid Fuels
- Arthur Cappella, Fayette County Planning Commission
- Jeff Raykes, Indiana County Planning Commission
- Doniele Andrus, Lawrence County Planning Commission
- Jeff Leithauser, Washington County Planning Department
- Chris Bova, Westmoreland County Planning Department
Brian Lawrence, Westmoreland County Planning Department
- Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office
Dave Cook, PennDOT District 10-0
Doug Dupnock, PennDOT District 10-0
Ben Mathews, PennDOT District 10-0
Dan Cessna, PennDOT District 11-0
Rob Miskanic, PennDOT District 11-0
Jeff Skalican, PennDOT District 11-0
Bill Kovach, PennDOT District 12-0
Angela Saunders, PennDOT District 12-0
David Wohlwill, Port Authority of Allegheny County
Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Management Association
Mavis Rainey, Oakland Transportation Management Association
Sidney Kaikai, L.R. Kimball
Chuck DiPietro, SPC Staff
Chuck Imbrogno, SPC Staff
Doug Smith, SPC Staff
Matt Pavlosky, SPC Staff
Karen Franks, SPC Staff
Ryan Gordon, SPC Staff
- (Indicates Voting Member)

1. May 19th, 2010 TTC Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)

Chuck DiPietro called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The May 19th, 2010 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. FHWA/PennDOT Central Office Reports

a.) Statewide Funding Crisis Hearings (Attachment B)

Kevin McCullough referred everyone to Attachment B, which was a funding crisis fact sheet and message from Secretary Biehler. Kevin reviewed the schedule for the upcoming State House Transportation Committee hearings on the transportation funding crisis. The Northwest Regional Hearing was scheduled for June 17th at 2:30 in Clarion and will include testimony from SPC, PenDOT District 1-0, and PennDOT District 10-0 PennDOT District 10 executives. The southwestern regional hearing was scheduled for June 18th in Monroeville and will include testimony from SPC, PennDOT District 11 and PennDOT District 12 executives, transit property representatives, TMA representatives, and other transportation stakeholders. Chuck DiPietro noted that the focus of the hearings is on solutions for the establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms for transportation in Pennsylvania, including public transit. Dan Cessna noted that each District has been allotted 20 minutes for testimony and that, in addition, he will be providing a statewide perspective in the introduction.

b.) 2010 National Scenic Byways Project Rankings & Summary (Attachment C)

Kevin McCullough referred everyone to Attachment C, which showed the final PennDOT ranking in priority order for the National Scenic Byway Grant Applications. Kevin noted on the attachment, the list of project grant amounts and project descriptions. Kevin elaborated that this list is still a proposed list because it is still pending review and approval by FHWA headquarters. Chuck DiPietro noted that priority projects numbers two (Ohiopyle visitor center) and three (National Road media project) are both in our region.

c.) 2010 National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program (Attachment D)

Kevin reviewed the National Covered Bridge Preservation Program and stated the deadline to submit applications to the program center is today. The program center will be coordinating with FHWA and the Districts. Any grants that may be awarded in PA will be administered by the individual Districts working with the county planning offices. Chuck DiPietro noted that Lawrence County has submitted two applications to the program.

d.) Round 4 ARRA projects from cost savings (Handout 1)

Kevin McCullough remarked that Handout 1 reflects what he covered in detail last month on the anticipated movements to obligate all ARRA funds. Handout 1 listed 15 additional projects that were submitted to FHWA for certification to accept ARRA funds. With the addition of these projects the total number of state ARRA projects comes to 341. Handout 1 showed one project from the SPC region on this list: Liberty Tunnel Rehab in the City of Pittsburgh (\$7.4 million in ARRA funds). The funds in the amount of \$25.9 million were made available through savings on existing ARRA projects. Kevin stated that if there are additional savings from ARRA projects, the savings will be distributed to projects in either the SPC or DVRPC regions. Kevin elaborated stating the ARRA funds come with a stipulation that they must be fully obligated by August 31, 2010. Kevin noted that the ARRA funds do not have flexibility to deobligate and roll into another project like the other federal funds typically allow. PennDOT has the goal of obligating every dollar of ARRA funds that PA received. The addition of these 15 additional projects will help to achieve that goal.

e.) FFY 2010 Obligation/Commitment of Funds- Local Bridges/PCTI

Kevin McCullough noted PennDOT is currently working to maximize all of the FFY 2010 obligation authority by utilizing it on projects and phases that are actively moving in the next few months. Kevin noted that typically PennDOT hits its obligation authority maximum in July and new work for the remainder of the fiscal year is done through an advanced construct process. Kevin stated that it is critical to use all of the obligation authority because excess obligation authority returns to a national pot for August redistribution. Pennsylvania would like to continue to be in a position to be a major recipient of the redistributed obligation authority.

Kevin noted a decision made at the Program Center since last TTC that is of interest to the group. The next set of financial guidance will consider a commitment to local bridges. Kevin noted that in the past the financial guidance has not included a breakout amount of bridge funds for local bridges. The amount of this commitment is unknown at this time and each of the planning partners will likely deal with it differently.

Kevin noted that, as discussed at the previous TTC meeting, Secretary Biehler has set

aside \$12 million for PCTI grants in each of the first two years of the 2011-2014 TIP for potential projects that display Smart Transportation principles. PennDOT will soon be announcing the opening of the application period. Kevin stated the anticipated release of the PCTI application will be mid-July with a possible addition of new PCTI projects to the program in late fall. The application and directions for submission will be much more focused this time around and is designed to be completed and submitted on-line. Kevin stated that last time around \$60 million was available statewide and it is anticipated that \$24 million will be available statewide this time around.

Art Cappella asked Kevin to elaborate on the “more focused application” of the program. Kevin responded that the last time around the application was very general and wide open, which resulted in a lot of nontraditional projects that were difficult to evaluate. In fact some of the selected projects had to be cancelled because they were not deliverable. In an attempt to minimize these issues this time around, the application will ask for more definitive project information. For example the application will have several project categories with specific related application questions. Chuck DiPietro stated that a PCTI guidebook is also being developed to clarify some of the transportation processes that local municipalities might not be familiar with and to help walk them through each section of the application. Lynn Heckman asked for a status of the PCTI projects from last round and if PCTI funds have been reallocated. Kevin noted that there were a couple of issues at the beginning on a few projects, but that the current focus is to obligate funds this year. The decisions on what to do with funds from some of these PCTI projects are considered on a case-by-case basis and if the project is not deliverable, PennDOT may pull the funding.

Chuck DiPietro noted that 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania hosted a PCTI event on June 9 to inform regional transportation stakeholders of the value of PennDOT’s PCTI program. Lynn Heckman noted that at the event 10,000 Friends and Sustainable Pittsburgh were attempting to characterize PCTI as a source for sustainable development funds. Lynn stated that she does not agree with this point of view and that the program should continue to center around smart transportation principles. Several members of the TTC concurred with Lynn on this point.

Chuck DiPietro noted that in related work, SPC is pursuing the submission of a grant application under HUD’s Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program. Kevin McCullough stated that the SPC Executive Committee has expressed interest in developing some funding source for livability/PCTI-type projects. Kevin believes that the next federal authorization will be going in this direction and that if this region can develop programs, processes, and project selection criteria, it should be well positioned for emerging trends. Lynn Heckman noted that Secretary LaHood is definitely going in this direction.

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 and Handout 2)

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:

- o US 119 over US 422 – Dave reminded everyone of the administrative action last month to remove a cracked beam in the bridge, which was only a temporary solution to a reoccurring problem of trucks hitting the bridge. This month District 10-0 is requesting a new project and PE phase added to the current TIP to explore This project will be to remove and replace the concrete decks and barrier, replace the damaged beams, place new expansion dams, perform substructure repairs, and replace bearings. In addition, the scope will include provisions to increase the vertical clearance to meet current design criteria to help prevent future damage from overheight vehicles.

Karen Franks asked if there is a total cost associated with this new project. Dave stated that he will have to get back to Karen with the exact cost, but it will be substantial given the solutions required to increase vertical clearance. Dan Cessna asked if the bridges were structurally deficient. Following the meeting, Doug Dupnock confirmed with the District Bridge Engineer that both structures are indeed structurally deficient.

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

b.) PennDOT District 11-0 (Attachment F)

Rob Miskanic noted that District 11-0 had only administrative actions this month. The administrative actions were all straight forward and there were no questions. TTC approval was not required. Rob added that the District would be bringing the Liberty Tunnel Rehab to the TTC next month once the final clearance has been received and it is cleared to receive ARRA funds.

c.) PennDOT District 12-0 (Attachment G and Handout 3)

Angela Saunders of PennDOT District 12-0 pointed to the administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 12-0 had no amendments this month. Angela did highlight a

few of the administrative actions:

- Ohioople PCTI project – improvements to SR 381 to support new visitor center.
- SR 0088 over Ten Mile Creek
- Washington and Jefferson College – Pedestrian and traffic flow improvements on SR 19 in Washington.
- Meadowlands Interchange – interchange improvements associated with an economic development project

Chuck DiPietro stated that due to the cost of the administrative actions associated with the W&J College project and the Meadowlands interchange, TTC approval was required. The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the District 12-0 administrative action requests to the TIP.

5. Draft 2011-2014 TIP, Public Comment Period and Public Meetings

Chuck DiPietro stated that the public comment period for the Draft TIP will continue until 4 p.m. on July 13th. There are public meetings being held in each county during the public comment period. Matt Pavlosky provided a brief summary of the public meetings held thus far in Indiana County, Lawrence County, Fayette County, Beaver County, and Washington County. Matt thanked all the support and participation from the county planning offices and the PennDOT Districts in assisting in the meetings to date. The public meetings are more structured this time around and providing an informal Q&A discussion session has been very popular and has produced quality discussions at each meeting. Matt noted that people seem to be receptive to new types of funding mechanisms for transportation infrastructure and public transit. Chuck noted that between the close of the public comment period and the Commission action there are a lot of process steps and documentation work to be completed. Chuck noted in addition to the TIP document, the support documents (Air Quality Conformity and Environmental Justice Report) are also out for public comment. Chuck noted that as comments come in on the TIP documents, it may be necessary to request some assistance from the Districts, transit properties, or SPC member county planning offices in addressing these comments with responses.

Kevin McCullough stated that FHWA has insisted that there be a public comment period for the STIP. Kevin noted that to comply with this request, the program center will be developing some visualization interfaces and making some refinements in the project descriptions in order to present a consistent statewide review of the STIP. Kevin stated that they may need some District assistance in some of these efforts.

Chuck DiPietro highlighted the upcoming STC business meeting in Pittsburgh along with the Oakland Transportation Management Area Annual Meeting on August 12th. Chuck noted that at the STC meeting in August the TYP and STIP will be approved.

Mavis Rainey explained that at this year's OTMA Annual Meeting is presenting a transportation

Panel discussion including: Secretary Allen Biehler, PA Secretary of Transportation; Steve Bland, Port Authority Executive; Don Carter, CMU; Jim Ritzman, PennDOT; and Mike Lynch, FHWA.

6. Road Safety Audits (Attachment H)

Doug Smith referred everyone to Attachment H, which was the SPC road safety audit candidate project submission form. Doug noted that SPC is anticipating doing three road safety audits this upcoming fiscal year and that the form can be used to submit candidate locations for a road safety audit to him. Forms should be e-mailed to Doug. Chuck DiPietro noted that the feedback from the transit operators on the RSA presentation during the Joint May 19th TOC/TTC meeting was very positive.

7. Linking Planning and NEPA Update (Handout 4)

Chuck DiPietro reviewed the status of the ongoing PennDOT statewide initiative to redesign the project development process to integrate linking planning and NEPA principals. Chuck pointed to Handout 4, which was an extract from the new LRTP guidance document that describes the Linking Planning and NEPA background and process related to the development of LRTPs. Chuck reference page 74 of the extract that shows a diagram of the new project development process. Chuck expressed caution with how screening form 1 would be utilized as a request for transportation problems/projects given the current funding/maintenance crises. Chuck noted we are awaiting the detailed instructions that are being developed to accompany the screening forms.

Chuck summarized what is happening now with the initiative according to the latest newsletter on the topic.

- Review and comment on the guidance documents and design manuals.
- Training sessions with PennDOT staff that will prepare these staff members to “roll out” the new approaches with the Planning Partner staff later this summer and in the fall.
 - The first webinar session will be held next Thursday, June 24th from 1:00-3:00 PM with the PennDOT design and project delivery staff in each district to begin walking through the new processes and procedures.
 - A second session will be held with the district staff from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon on July 13th.
- Training sessions with the Planning Partners will be scheduled.
- Development of performance metrics.
- Development of IT support to the process.

Kevin McCullough stated that they are pushing forward with implementation; however some of the IT support is a work in progress at this time.

Chuck stated there will be work sessions in each district with Central Office staff, SPC staff, and

the SPC member county planning departments to work on the operational details of the new process. This coordination will be critical. Chuck noted that all the MPOs and RPOs have different characteristics and processes so the overall process will build in flexibility. Chuck envisioned the possibility that the development process may have different nuances depending on the District. Chuck added that we will continue to keep the TTC updated on the developments of the Linking Planning and NEPA statewide initiative.

8. Other Business

a.) Transit Operators Committee (TOC) - June 16

Chuck briefly summarized several areas that were discussed at the TOC:

- Regional Smart Card implementation
- West Busway Transit Oriented Development Study
- Upcoming round of PCTI grants
- Public comment period for the TIP

b.) Operations and Safety Committee – July 20th

Doug Smith reviewed the proceedings of the May 18th Operations and Safety Committee meeting. Doug described the meeting as the kick-off to the update of the regional operations plan. The progress made under the current regional operations plan was discussed including developments in SPC's Regional Signal Program. Doug noted the July 20th meeting will continue discussions on what new initiatives can be included in the regional operations plan.

c.) Active Allegheny

Lynn Heckman briefly noted that the development of the Active Allegheny Plan is underway with a website launch and two public meetings to be held on June 23rd at Point Park University Ballroom at 4:30 and June 24th at Carnegie Borough Building at 4:30.

d.) Next TTC Meeting – anticipated July 15th

e.) Next Commission Meeting – June 28th and July 26th.

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.