

Meeting Minutes for November 18th, 2010
Transportation Technical Committee Meeting
Regional Enterprise Tower - Pittsburgh, PA

Attendees:

- Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County Economic Development
Bernie Rossman, Allegheny County Department of Public Works
Steve Shanley, Allegheny County Department of Public Works
- Darin Alviano, Armstrong County Planning Commission
- Tammy Frank, Beaver County
- Dave Johnston, Butler County Planning Commission
Joel MacKay, Butler County Planning Commission
- Arthur Cappella, Fayette County Planning Commission
- Kevin Gray, Greene County Planning Commission
- Amy McKinney, Lawrence County Planning Commission
- Pat Hassett, Pittsburgh Department of Public Works
Patrick Roberts, Pittsburgh Department of City Planning
- Jeff Leithauser, Washington County Planning Commission
- Chris Bova, Westmoreland County Planning Department
- Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office
Matt Smoker, FHWA
Tracy Stack, DCNR
Dave Cook, PennDOT District 10-0
Kathy Reeger, PennDOT District 10-0
Rob Miskanic, PennDOT District 11-0
Stephanie Spang, PennDOT District 11-0
Stacy Rabatin, PennDOT District 12-0
Angela Saunders, PennDOT District 12-0
Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Association
Mary-Beth Kim, Airport Corridor Transportation Association
Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA
Chuck DiPietro, SPC Staff
Chuck Imbrogno, SPC Staff
Sara Walfoort, SPC Staff
Domenic D'Andrea
Karen Franks, SPC Staff
Tom Klevan, SPC Staff
Ryan Gordon, SPC Staff

- (Indicates Voting Member)

1. October 14th, 2010 TTC Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)

Chuck DiPietro called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The October 14th, 2010 meeting minutes were approved with no revisions.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. FHWA/PennDOT Central Office Reports

a.) Updated Federal & State Perspectives per November Election Results

Kevin McCullough reported that Central Office is preparing documents to be used in the transition to the new governor administration. Kevin noted that they will be working on passing along information pertaining to the current philosophy towards key continuing projects in order to maintain consistency. In Kevin's opinion, there are many questions on the transit side as far as how to address the funding crisis. For example, there are currently serious impacts on the operations of the Port Authority of Allegheny County. Kevin is not sure what the direction of the new administration will be on some of these issues.

Matt Smoker discussed the congressional changes coming out of the elections earlier in the month. The previous chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Oberstar) was defeated. This development will likely further delay the passage of a new transportation reauthorization. Matt noted that Representative Oberstar was leading the push for a transportation reauthorization bill in Congress.

b.) Highlights from PennDOT's Annual Planning Partners Meeting (Handout 1)

Kevin McCullough reported that the PennDOT Planning Partners Meeting was held on October 18th through 20th. The agenda was set up to cover many of the hot issues facing the transportation planning field in Pennsylvania. Kevin added that brainstorming sessions were held on some of the upcoming new initiatives such as the local network inventory and linking planning and NEPA. Chuck DiPietro noted the following sessions: impacts of Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling, Linking Planning and NEPA, MPO/RPO Presentations, and a discussion on future challenges and opportunities. Chuck noted that there were remarks by Renee Sigel of FHWA, Jack Basso of AASHTO, and PA Secretary of Transportation Allen Biehler. Chuck highlighted that Secretary Biehler discussed the transition to the new administration and acknowledged some of the

(Attachment A)

achievements during the time he has been the Secretary, especially thanking everyone for the effort involved in utilizing the federal stimulus funds.

Chuck elaborated on the Marcellus Shale gas drilling session, which included an expert from Penn State University, the DE from District 3, and planners from Northern Tier and Lycoming County Planning Commissions. District 3, Northern Tier, and Lycoming reported on the transportation infrastructure impacts, the community impacts, and environmental impacts that they have experienced associated with the shale gas drilling.

Lynn Heckman asked what these areas were doing to protect their previous investments in transportation infrastructure. Matt Smoker agreed that there is a concern in protecting tax payer investments in transportation infrastructure. Matt noted that District 3-0 discussed the fact that they regularly meet with the gas drilling company representatives to negotiate roadway improvements and maintenance. The gas companies have been doing these types of roadway surface treatments at their own expense. Lynn noted that this sounds voluntary and it is not anticipated that voluntary measures will continue to realistically compensate for the impacts incurred on the transportation infrastructure. Kevin Gray noted that a new criteria for issuing municipal bonds to fund roadway repairs is currently stalled and even if this bonding is implemented the funds raised would be deficient to repair the roads being impacted. Amy McKinney noted that there are sessions being held in Lawrence County that educate land owners and businesses about the details of the gas leases.

Chuck DiPietro pointed to Handout 1, which included information about the Pennsylvania State Transportation Advisory Committee study on the future direction of transportation in the state. Chuck noted that the report is expected to be released in early 2011. The report will identify the critical transportation issues facing Pennsylvania over the next ten years.

c.) Linking Planning and NEPA Planning Partners – The Link Newsletter and Draft Rules of Engagement (Attachment B and C)

Kevin McCullough pointed to Attachment B and C, which contained “The Link”, a newsletter on the Linking Planning and NEPA initiative and a document titled “Rules of Engagement” regarding the new process. The newsletters provide periodic communication regarding the Linking Planning and NEPA initiative. Kevin stated that the “Rules of Engagement” was developed to answer some of the frequently asked questions that were being generated by the planning partners. Chuck DiPietro stated that the “Rules of Engagement” is a good start towards clarifying PennDOT’s LPN implementation process.

(Attachment A)

Kevin stated that Linking Planning and NEPA will continue to be a focus moving forward into the next administration. Kevin acknowledged that the efforts to improve the project development process will evolve and continue to transform over time. Kevin compared it to the evolution of the Interstate Management TIP into its current status as a prioritized plan for Interstate projects. Chuck DiPietro noted that he still expects to see work sessions held in the Districts regarding the implementation of the Linking Planning and NEPA process involving District staff, MPO staff, County Planning/City of Pittsburgh staff, and TMAs.

d.) Central Office Fourth Quarter TIP Progress Report (Attachment D)

Kevin McCullough reviewed Attachment D, the Fourth Quarter Federal Fiscal Year 2010 Progress Report. Kevin briefly reviewed what the progress report showed and the status of the various funding categories in the region. Overall the region expended 101% of its targeted goal for fiscal year 2010. Kevin noted the under utilization of the APD fund category and stated that he is investigating this. Lynn Heckman asked if the region left funds on the table in the Act 44 Discretionary category. Karen Franks noted that we were way over the anticipated goal in the regular Act 44 category, but under in discretionary Act 44; in the end it balanced out. Kevin elaborated that Act 44 Discretionary is similar to Spike funds in that if there are unused funds, they can be moved out of the region to other eligible projects in other parts of the state. Kevin noted this movement of funds is probably why the Act 44 discretionary category appears underutilized.

e.) PennDOT Project Development Quarterly Newsletter (Attachment E)

Chuck DiPietro pointed to Attachment E, which was the Fall 2010 issue of the Project Development Quarterly newsletter.

f.) Other

Matt Smoker reported on the announcement of the TIGER II grant awardees. Three projects from Pennsylvania received grant awards one of which is within the SPC region. The project selected for funding in this region was the Allegheny River Green Boulevard. Patrick Roberts described the project as improvements to a multimodal rail corridor to improve access to adjacent vacant and underutilized property for future residential development. Matt Smoker noted that it is still being determined who the lead Federal agency will be administering the project.

4. Action on Amendments and Modifications to the 2011 to 2014 TIP

(Attachment A)

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

a.) PennDOT District 10-0 (Attachment F)

Dave Cook of PennDOT District 10-0 pointed to the administrative actions to the 2011-2014 TIP. District 10-0 had no amendment request this month. Dave commented that he has to remove one of the projects (Chestnut Ridge Bridges) listed in the mail out version of the fiscal constraint chart.

The PennDOT District 10-0 administrative action requests to the TIP did not require TTC approval and was presented only for information purposes.

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

Rob Miskanic of PennDOT District 11-0 pointed to the amendment requests and administrative actions to the 2011-2014 TIP. District 11-0 had six amendments:

- SR 65 – Added \$150,000 in Construction funds to the current TIP
- ITS install – Added \$45,000 in Construction funds to the current TIP
- King Chapel Road Earmark – Added Earmark construction funds (\$499,915) to the TIP for 2011.
- Greensburg Pike Bridge – Adding \$7.05 million in construction funds to the current TIP (Pending PMC approval).
- Liberty Bridge – Added PE phase to the current TIP
- Children’s Hospital – Added Earmark construction funds to the current TIP

Kevin McCullough asked about the local commitment on the Kings Chapel project in the event of a cost increase. Rob responded that the cost estimates are close at this point and that any additional funds required would be the responsibility of the local entity. Chuck DiPietro noted that further discussion of this project will be necessary in agenda item 5. Karen Franks asked what will be the total cost of the Liberty Bridge project. Rob replied approximately \$30 million. Pat Hassett asked if a nonprofit could enter into the reimbursement agreement for federal funds. Matt Smoker responded that it is allowable. The administrative actions were all straight forward and there were no questions.

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

c.) PennDOT District 12-0 (Attachment H)

(Attachment A)

Stacy Rabatin of PennDOT District 12-0 pointed to the amendments and administrative actions to the 2011-2014 TIP. District 12-0 had one amendment this month, adding the Greene County Airport Access Road Project to the current TIP. The administrative actions were all straight forward and there were no questions. Administrative actions required approval by the TTC due to the dollar threshold exceeded.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 12-0 and administrative action requests to the TIP.

For informational purposes, Stacey reviewed the adjustments made to the Interstate Maintenance TIP to accommodate the emergency bridge demolition and replacement of the SR 1093 bridge over I-70.

5. TTC Recommendation to Commission on Lawrence County Functional Classification Change Request (Attachment I).

Chuck DiPietro provided background on the request from Lawrence County to reclassify King's Chapel Road. Attachment I included the original request letter from the Lawrence County Commissioners to PennDOT District 11-0. Chuck stated that the King's Chapel Road received an earmark to improve access into the Millennium Industrial Park. Chuck noted that the functional classification may need to be reclassified in order to make it eligible to receive federal earmark funds. PennDOT Bureau of Planning and Research has detailed procedures in place for functional classification revisions. Changing the functional classification of a roadway requires Commission action. Chuck stated that Lawrence County is seeking a TTC action to approve the reclassification and recommend the change to the Commission for approval. Chuck summarized the recommendation to reclassify Kings Chapel Road west of I-376 to Pulaski Road as a Rural Major Collector, and east of I-376 to Old Pulaski Road as an Urban Collector. Matt Smoker stated that an earmark may be eligible for a project not on the federal-aid system, but it would depend on the specific language contained in the earmark legislation. If the language is specific enough, the road segment would not need to be on the federal-aid system and a functional classification change may not be required.

Chuck DiPietro raised the question is this project fully funded. According to Rob Miskanic's review of the TIP amendment request, the cost estimates appear to be on target and the local match is being provided by the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC). Rob noted that in the event of a cost increase on the project it would be the responsibility of the local sponsor. Amy McKinney stated that as far as she knows the LCEDC has the local match at the current cost estimate. Amy stated that she can't speculate on the local match if there turns out to be significant cost increases. Amy asked if there is a need to request the functional classification if Matt Smoker determines that it is not required. Karen Franks noted that if there are significant cost increases, this stretch of road would have to be on the federal-aid system in order to be eligible for further TIP funds. Matt Smoker noted that if the

county thought they had to reclassify the road in order to use the earmark that assumption may turn out to not be true, but if additional funds might be needed then pursuing the functional classification may be a good idea. Chuck noted that it might set a precedent exerting a little more control over earmarks.

The TTC motioned and approved an action to recommend the functional classification change of King's Chapel Road to the Commission. The recommendation is contingent on what Matt Smoker determines in regard to the specific earmark language and the applicability to this specific project.

6. Business/Status Reports

a.) Regional Signal Program (Handout 2)

Domenic D'Andrea provided an update on the SPC regional signal program. Domenic reviewed the ongoing activities related to signal projects from round 1 of the program. Domenic reported that several construction contracts have been let and notice to proceed letters issued; the locations and scopes of the round 1 projects are available on the SPC website. Domenic mentioned that data collection on travel time and video runs are also being conducted for use in after project evaluation.

Domenic provided an update on activities associated with round two of the program and referred everyone to Handout 2, which listed all the applicant projects for the second round of the program. Domenic noted that an agreement template has been approved with Central Office Legal Council. Domenic stated that all 29 of the project submissions to round two of the program were recommended for advancement by the application review committee. Domenic noted that he will be verifying the cost estimates and project scopes for the applications in the coming months. Domenic summarized the status of the consultant selection process. The RFQ went out in August and six firms submitted proposals. Domenic stated that four firms were selected for interviews and a recommendation for one firm was made by the selection committee and submitted to executive management. Kevin McCullough asked about the status of the local match for the projects in the City of New Castle. Domenic stated that it is unlikely that New Castle will be able to come up with the required matching funds for all five of the projects they submitted, perhaps one of the five could be funded. Kevin responded that we will have to consider these types of eligibility factors if opportunities for changes in funding for the signal program emerge. Chuck DiPietro asked how much do the cost estimates typically change once they are reviewed. Domenic responded that typically they increase in the neighborhood of 30 percent, but in all cases in round one, the projects were retained and moved forward. David Johnston asked that if the local match emerges on the projects all 29 projects could be funded. Domenic stated that in that case all 29 projects could be advanced. Domenic noted that there does not appear to be any AIM funds available to

assist municipalities in Allegheny County for this round.

b.) SPC Public Participation Plan Update

Sara Walfoort reviewed the activities underway to update the SPC Public Participation Plan. Sara stated that there is a 45-day public review period prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan, which is expected to take place in March/April time period. Sara expects the plan to discuss the usage of new types of public outreach especially web-based mediums and possibly reducing the number of hard copy review locations. Matt Smoker added that prior to the public comment period, FHWA could provide a review of the public participation plan, although it's not required. Sara concurred that this would be a good step to take in the update of the Public Participation Plan.

Sara mentioned that she has provided PennDOT District 11-0 with an inventory of the problem drainage grates that pose hazards to bicyclists.

c.) Transit Operators Committee

Tom Klevan reviewed the proceedings from the November 17th Transit Operators Committee. Tom reported that the TOC spent time discussing the white paper put out by the PA Public Transit Association on funding for public transit relevant to the current crisis. Tom stated that paper was very good and recommended some potential solutions. Tom noted that some of the modeling work that SPC did to simulate the impact of the transit cutbacks was presented to the Port Authority Board and was also cited recently in an article for the City Paper. Tom reported that the TOC also reviewed the latest transit report cards and formed a work group to discuss regional trip planning capabilities. The TOC approved several amendments to the transit TIP and discussed the TIGER 2 grant awardees. Tom stated that the TOC viewed a presentation on the Carnegie Mellon University's Traffic 21 Initiative. Tom recommended that the TTC also see this presentation that highlights the technological research being conducted at CMU that have applications in Transportation. Chuck DiPietro elaborated on the CMU Traffic 21 Initiative and agreed with Tom that the presentation would be of interest for the TTC.

d.) Other

Kevin McCullough reviewed the status of the PCTI Applications. The selection committee is in the process of reviewing all of the applications. Kevin reported that the review committee has had two meetings and have cut the number of applications in half

(Attachment A)

and are now considering a shortlist of projects totaling around 50 million. In this second round of PCTI funding only \$24 million will be available statewide for the first two years of the TIP. Kevin stated that it is going to be hard to maintain balance between regions at the current funding level. Kevin noted that one of the big decision is what to do with TE type projects, because there are some good TE projects that are ready to go. Kevin suggested that January is a realistic time frame to expect an announcement about project selection. Lucinda Beattie asked Kevin how the planning applications are fairing in the review process. Kevin acknowledged that he has been surprised at the number of planning applications and there is a number of interesting planning study proposals with reasonable costs associated with them. Kevin noted that there is no set quota for number of planning studies. Kevin did mention that they are looking to fund construction projects that originated from previously funded PCTI studies.

Next Transportation Technical Committee – December 9th

Next Commission Meeting – December 13th

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 a new project or delete an existing project (except for emergency situations and 100% state or local funded projects as stated below)
- 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
- Adds a project from a funding initiative or line item that utilizes 100% state or local funding
- Correction of a misprint or data entry error
- Addition of local match funds
- Schedule change, for projects or phases in any of the first four years of the TIP
- Change in the funding source
- Exempt projects

New or Deleted Phase

The Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee can approve an administrative action if the cost is \$5 million or less for a highway and/or transit project.

Line Items

The programming on the TIP of specific projects within an approved line item (i.e., betterments, rail-highway crossings, Transit Section 5310 Program, transportation enhancements, bridge preservation and 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 Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee approval.

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 of \$1 million or less by reporting the change to the committee for informational purposes only. The Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee must approve a cost change greater than \$1 million but \$5 million or less for a highway and/or transit project. The action becomes effective when it is forwarded by the committee to PennDOT and FHWA or FTA.

Administrative actions do not require Federal approval but FHWA and FTA reserve the right to reject an administrative action if it is not consistent with federal regulations and the current STIP/TIP Modifications Memorandum of Understanding between PennDOT, FHWA, and FTA. SPC and PennDOT will work cooperatively to address and respond to any such administrative actions rejected and returned by FHWA and/or FTA.

TIP Amendments

Any project change that cannot be processed within the rules governing administrative actions must be handled as a TIP amendment request. 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 and any emergency projects that are considered administrative actions)
- Adds a new project phase or deletes a phase that exceeds \$5 million for a highway and/or transit project
- Creates a new line item
- Adds or deletes a project or a project phase that transfers Federal funds between a TIP and a Statewide line item
- Involves a major change in the project scope of work or design concept

New or Deleted Project

The Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators 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 and/or 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 Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee. Changes that exceed \$10 million require approval by the Commission.

Major TIP Amendments

A proposed change must be considered as a Major TIP amendment if it meets any of the following criteria:

- Turnpike projects advancing under the 1987 Turnpike Expansion Act
- Amendment requests with an air quality impact that requires air quality testing and conformity determination and a 30-day public comment period including a public meeting before they can be presented to the Commission.
- Highway funds flexed to Transit projects
- A major significant change in the scope and/or schedule of an existing project
- A major deferral/delay to a lower priority project
- High visibility projects deemed potentially controversial. The Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee will interpret if any such proposed TIP change should follow the Major TIP Amendment procedures.
- A Major fiscal impact to the region

An opportunity for public review and comment will be provided for all major TIP Amendment requests. Amendment requests with an impact that has been deemed Major, are subject to a 30-day public comment period and a public meeting before they can be presented to the Commission.

Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee Authorization to handle TIP modifications as Administrative Actions and/or Amendments is an option intended to streamline the procedures and the effectiveness of the review process. Transportation Technical Committee or Transit Operators Committee members may request that Major TIP Amendment requirements be applied regardless of whether the change would otherwise qualify.

Special Expedited Approval Option

A proposed change requiring Transportation Technical Committee, Transit Operators Committee, or Commission action, may be expedited via e-mail, fax, and/or telephone ballot if it meets any of the following criteria:

- The safety of the public would be jeopardized by waiting until the TTC/TOC/Commission meets formally
- A project or projects would be significantly delayed by waiting until the TTC/TOC/Commission meets formally
- A delay would significantly and adversely affect, the scheduling, cost and/or funding of the project or projects
- The project is not considered a Major TIP Amendment
- When special funding uniquely made available through federal or state channels may be jeopardized by delays in project delivery or funding obligation

Expedited Procedures

A project narrative will be prepared by the project sponsor requesting expedited action including the project name and contact person, project description (including map), requested action, the justification for the ballot, the project funding, impacts to other projects, and any other discussion needed to supply the best information to the voting members.

The project request and narrative, will be e-mailed, faxed, and/or mailed to all voting members of the appropriate Committee and/or Commission within an appropriate time for a decision to be made. (A minimum of one week will be allowed for review and questions prior to the request for a vote. If less than one week is needed for the vote, justification shall be given.)

A deadline will be established for the tallying of votes. If a vote is not received by the deadline, SPC staff will attempt to contact the voting members to receive their votes. If approved, the action will then be forwarded by SPC staff to PennDOT and FHWA or FTA in accordance with established procedures. TIP amendments only become effective when federal approvals are received by SPC. As with administrative actions, SPC and PennDOT will work cooperatively to address and respond to any FHWA and/or FTA comments on TIP amendment actions.

Results of the vote will be presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee/Commission. Any remaining discussion of the issue will be allowed.