

**The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Regional Policy Advisory Committee
2 p.m.
April 22, 2024
42 21st Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

Attendees: Darin Alviano, Brad Berlin, Laura Byko, Art Capella, Pat Fabian, Robin Gorman, Nanuela Guevara, Sara Harvey, Amy McKinney, Dusty Elias Kirk, Chuck Kolling, Brandon Leach, Erin Molchaney, Kristin Mulkerin, Joylette Portlock, Johnna Pro, Mark Rafail, Mavis Rainey, Byron Stauffer and Vince Vicites.

Staff: Rich Fitzgerald, Kirk Brethauer, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Dom D'Andrea, Linda Duffy, Lillie Gabreski, Joey Georgy, Chuck Imbrogno, Jenn Lasser, Caitlin O'Connor, Jeremy Papay, DJ Ryan and Sara Walfoort.

SUMMARY: The conversation focused on various transportation infrastructure projects and initiatives in the region. Jenn highlighted the importance of sustainable planning and economic development, while Dom DAndrea emphasized the need for transportation planning and policy. Speakers discussed funding opportunities for regional projects, emergency response strategies, and the need for advocacy to involve companies like Verizon and Comcast in transportation infrastructure development. They also discussed the development of a regional complete streets policy and transportation improvement programs. Disappointment was expressed over the recent broadband funding allocation in southwestern Pennsylvania, particularly the lack of funding for Fayette County and Allegheny County.

OVERALL ACTION ITEMS:

- Send out the draft Complete Streets regional policy to commissioners for review and feedback.
- Provide two to three bullet point priorities from each county for a document to leave with lawmakers during the Harrisburg visit.
- Coordinate logistics for who is attending meetings in Harrisburg and note priorities. (Commissioners, DJ Ryan, Caitlin O'Connor, Jenn Lasser).
- Advocate for priorities with state legislators during the Harrisburg visit in early May.

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Chairman Vince Vicites called the meeting to order.

2. Action on minutes from the February 26, 2024 meeting

- Robin Gorman moved to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 meeting and Mark Rafail seconded. The motion carried.

3. Update on Save the Allegheny River Initiative – DJ Ryan, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy

- DJ discusses efforts to keep Allegheny River locks open longer, citing commitment from Army Corps to work with stakeholders.

4. Video on Our Region's Rivers that the SPC's team filmed/produced featuring 3 Rivers Waterkeepers' Captain Evan Clark – DJ Ryan, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy

- DJ shares video of Three Rivers Waterkeeper's work on rivers, highlighting their efforts to keep rivers clean (video was produced in-house by our Communications Department)

5. Update on the recent grant application (Climate Pollution Reduction Program) - DJ Ryan, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Policy

- Environmental resources office seeks to engage with public on water quality concerns. DJ highlights the partnership with Partner for Work, requiring good jobs principles for funding applicants.
- DJ adds, collaboration with many partners, including Joy Lead on Air, for a strong application.
- Senator Casey's office requests direct communication with members of Congress to support northern Appalachia set aside funding.
- Jenn highlights the importance of the \$15 million grant for local development in Pennsylvania.
- Jenn highlights the quadrupling of approved applications for regional development projects, emphasizing the importance of keeping funds in Pennsylvania.

6. Update on Complete Streets Policy – Leann Chaney, Active Transportation Coordinator

- Leann emphasizes complete streets approach as equitable and context-sensitive design for all users.
- Leann discusses regional vision for complete streets, collaboration with local governments.
- Complete Streets policy framework identifies elements policies should address, based on Smart Growth America and National Complete Streets Coalition resources.
- Dom DAndrea seeks feedback on Complete Streets policy, plans to present finalized draft to Commission in June.
- Complete Streets result in safer streets, part of staff review for improving safety, says Josh.

7. Brief on SPC's Community Chronicles – Rich Fitzgerald, Executive Director

- In Lawrence County, groundbreaking ceremony for StoneCrest Business Park with local officials and Lieutenant Governor Davis.
- In Butler County, Secretary Granholm meets with commissioners regarding steel mill and potential 1000-1500 jobs.
- Rich discussed initiative to bring companies together to overcome barriers to international trade.
- Armstrong County event opened 10 miles of Pittsburgh to Erie trail, with SPC representation.

8. From the Floor / Other Business

- Broadband infrastructure funding in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Commissioners Fabian (Armstrong) and Vicites (Fayette) spoke about how both respective counties did not receive funding from latest grant award. They also want SPC to have representation on a subcommittee that the Broadband Authority has. Discussion over the need for coordinating efforts across county lines when needed to receive larger grant funding for Southwestern Pennsylvania by working together. Reminder on the next meeting date (June 24, 2024).

9. Adjourn

- Chairman Vince Vicites adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.