

**LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMBINED TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**December 4, 2013**

Members of the Coordinating Committee:

Attached is a copy of the minutes of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS) Combined Technical Committee and Coordinating Committee meeting, held on December 4, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 233 at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Engineering District 4-0 Office, Dunmore, Pennsylvania.

Please check for errors or omissions.

Thank you.

A meeting of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Combined Technical Committee and Coordinating Committee was held on Wednesday, December 4, 2013 in Conference Room 233 of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation District Office in Dunmore, Pennsylvania.

Mr. George Roberts, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and asked for self-introductions. Mr. Roberts did not receive any letters of proxy. (All permanent proxies are listed in the committee member lists attached to these minutes.)

In this document: Mr. Roberts identifies Mr. George Roberts, and Dean will identify Mr. Dean Roberts to avoid confusion.

Mr. Roberts stated for the record that in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Law and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Coordinating Committee Secretary Adrian Merolli, submitted the required public meeting notice, which appeared in local papers.

### **ITEM #1 – APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 5, 2013 LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Copies of the June 5, 2013 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Technical Committee Meeting minutes were mailed to all committee members. Mr. Pitoniak asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Hearing none, a motion to approve the June 5, 2013 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Technical Committee Meeting minutes, was made by John Pocius, seconded by Nancy Snee, and carried.

### **ITEM #2 – JUNE 19, 2013 LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Copies of the June 19, 2013 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes were mailed to all committee members. Mr. Roberts asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Mr. Pitoniak noted that under Item #3 Transit Modifications: that last sentence in the first paragraph should end with “still in negotiation to be purchased”. Mr. Roberts asked for further additions, deletions or corrections. Hearing none, a motion to approve the June 19, 2013 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes as noted, was made by James Arey, seconded by George Roberts, and carried.

### **ITEM #3 – 2013-2016 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT AND MODIFICATIONS**

Copies of the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment and modifications were sent out to all committee members. Mr. Fisher highlighted the amendment that will require a vote. The purpose of the amendment is to add approximately \$4.6 million to the Keyser Avenue project. Mr. Roberts gave the committees some background on the project noting that although the project is currently under construction the gas, water and sewer utilities doubled and tripled their actual main line replacement after the construction began. Mr. Roberts

cited the example that the gas company originally indicated they would replace 11,300 linear feet of gas main under the project which they doubled to 22,500 linear feet; the water company originally indicated they would replace 1,300 linear feet of water main under the project which they tripled to 4,570 linear feet. The gas and water companies each have 150 services to homes along Keyser Avenue. PennDOT did not want to stop the utilities from doing all this work because they did not want to put a new paving surface on the roadway with 100-year old main lines beneath that would require pave cuts to correct or fix those main lines in the future. This did add significant costs to the project but it is in line with the Department's reconstruction efforts for our roadways. The base work for the roadway will be done after the utilities have completed their work and the wearing course will last longer without being cut by the utilities to complete their work. Mr. Pitoniak noted that the construction delay for the project was also beneficial since the project is part of an experimental paving project through the federally funded Highways for Life program and the outcome would be best with a strong base.

Mr. Wansacz asked if funds were taken from other projects to supplement the Keyser Avenue project funding. It was noted that low bid savings on the Airport Access Road yielded approximately \$1.7 million, low bid for the 2013 Federal Aid Paving project yielded approximately \$1.3 million and approximately \$1.6 million was taken from the Urban Reserve line item. Another concern was that the Airport Access Road would not be complete within the bid range. It was noted that project funding is obligated according to bid amounts and if there are additional unforeseen costs as a project progresses the Department and planning partners have processes in place to address funding increases. Ms. Bishop clarified the funding amounts remaining in the Urban Reserve Line items across the fiscal years; and the state and federal funding splits. It was noted that this funding is utilized on projects through the TIP update process. Dean noted that urban funding can be used on federal aid projects (bridges and roadways) and that a requirement of this funding is that the project is already on the TIP or on the Long Range Plan (LRP) – (in addition to Keyser Avenue other examples of projects that would be able to use the Urban Reserve line item funding include: the interstate system, US 6, Route 315, Route 11, K-Routes, etc.).

Mr. Wansacz asked if the Urban Reserve funding could also be used for road widening. It was noted that this funding can be used on roads on the federal aid system which includes the roadways on the expanded National Highway System (NHS). Mr. Wansacz asked if this funding could be used to expand roadway shoulders. It was noted that SR 3002 by McDade Park scheduled to be paved with expanded shoulders and is on the federal aid paving program. Mr. Wansacz noted that paving on Keyser Avenue was exceptional and that the County appreciated the work being done.

Mr. Pitoniak asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion was made that the Technical Committee recommend that the Coordinating Committee adopt the 2013-2016 TIP Amendment for the funding changes on the Keyser Avenue project, was made by John Pocius, seconded by Corey O'Brien, and carried.

Mr. Cochrane noted that an administrative action from the November 7, 2013 report emailed to the committees included a LLTS line item for funding for the Back Mountain Trail not listed on the TIP handout. It was noted that the administrative action for this project was completed and

the funding was moved. There was an issue running the report for the meeting and the last couple pages with that information did not print.

Mr. Roberts asked for further questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion was made that the Coordinating Committee adopt the 2013-2016 TIP Amendment for the funding changes on the Keyser Avenue project, was made by John Pocius, seconded by Butch Frati and carried.

#### **ITEM #4 – STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (STC) UPDATE**

Mr. Frank Paczewski of the State Transportation Commission introduced himself and summarizing the State Transportation Commission (STC). Mr. Paczewski noted that he lives in Luzerne County and has a business in Lackawanna County. He has lived in the area since 1966. He was appointed by the Governor a year ago to serve and represent the Northeast on the State Transportation Commission. Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch is the chairman of the board for the commission which consists of 14 other members and was established by state law in 1970. The Secretary of Transportation serves as the chairperson, four of the board members are elected officials (senators and representatives) the other ten from throughout the state represent different regions for a 15-member board. Changes in PennDOT and the operational processes have brought changes to how the STC serves the Commonwealth.

The STC reviews Pennsylvania's transportation system and provides recommendations for updating the 12-Year Program (TYP). Changes include modernizing the STC which has already produced the first Transportation Performance Report that will be produced every two years. In coordination with the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission (TFAC) a number of recommendations are being adopted to meet federal requirements and support the recently passed Transportation Bill. Currently, the STC has a pilot program for more public input for the commission hearings; the program is summarized by Secretary Schoch in a web presentation with an informative question and answers session at the end; the presentation which can be found at <http://www.talkPAtransportation.com> under Stay Involved or [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us) under Share Your Transportation Priorities. Online surveys are provided also for public feedback on the TYP between the updates. The next STC meeting is December 12, 2013 in Harrisburg and everyone is encouraged to attend this and their local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) meetings. The web meetings will also be held quarterly. Everyone is encouraged to participate online, via phone and if they prefer; via paper surveys and letters.

Mr. Paczewski reiterated that he is here to serve the region and will help the planning partners move forward with the TYP and updated format for the commission hearings. Mr. Roberts reinforced that this program is part of Secretary Schoch's modernization processes, to help bring the computer population/generation to the meetings.

Mr. Arey noted that this is an improvement in participation. Public participation at regional meetings has dwindled meetings have had six or seven general public participants. Regional meetings that normally took days of meetings to cover have been handled in one day over a four-hour span. It was noted that at the first web hearing there were approximately 1,400 participants this was over 1,390 more participants than at the last traditional STC public meetings held

regionally. Dean and Mr. Pitoniak agreed that more people are seeing and using the electronic format for project promotion.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the LLTS Committees moved to the next order of business – Commuter Services of Pennsylvania Presentation.

#### **ITEM #5 – COMMUTER SERVICES OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESENTATION**

Mr. Mathew Boyer, Executive Director of Commuter Services of Pennsylvania introduced Ms. Stacy Newcomer, Deputy Project Manager. Mr. Boyer thanked the committees for their time with special thanks to Ms. Snee for her assistance in organizing the event. Mr. Boyer gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining what Commuter Services of Pennsylvania, a program of the non-profit Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership (SRTP) out of south central Pennsylvania. The program is run through the Congest Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. The main goal is to get a car off the road to improve air quality. Commuter Services goes through MPOs because the funding of the program is 100% CMAQ funding (currently, Commuter Services is working with seven MPOs). SRTP, the parent company, is a nine county board that includes nine counties, six chambers of commerce, six transit authorities and at least five MPOs.

The presentation covered how the program brings agencies together crossing district and county boundaries. Surveying large businesses for carpooling and enhanced ride to work transit routes, the program brings together the Department of Transportation, transit authorities, industrial parks, and large businesses to show common locales of employees and recommend the best alternatives to single car travelers. The program does not have a fleet of vehicles that would take business away from transit authorities. The program brings everyone to the table and shows benefits and savings associated with car-pooling and higher utilization of mass transit. As individuals and business register with the program information and data is updated on a yearly basis so once someone moves or wants to leave the program the carpools, transit agencies and business owners are kept up-to-date on ridership needs. The program includes an emergency ride home for anyone who is in the program and needs to return home outside the normally scheduled carpool or transit schedule. The program is presented to employees on their lunch breaks and the initial targets for the program are employers of 100 employees or more.

It was noted that for LLTS the cost would be \$350,000 per year to start up and maintain the program. The funding comes through CMAQ and the MPO will need to review projects currently using CMAQ funding as well as talk to the transit authorities. It was noted that the transit authorities could not attend this combined meeting because of their tri-annual review was underway this week. It was noted that since this is the time for the TIP and TYP updates it would be an ideal time to have the discussion and changes to implement this program. Ms. Beth Artman SRTP Chairperson noted that the program has a five-year contract and can be pivotal in the regionalization of the transit authorities in order to benefit with additional funding with the new transportation bill. Ms. Palermo asked if the program is easily accessible to the grown Latino population. It was note that the website ([PaCommuterServices.org](http://PaCommuterServices.org)) was available in five languages and that program presenters can speak basic Spanish and interpreters can be hired as needed.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the LLTS Committees moved to the next order of business – Other business

## **ITEM #6 – OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Ramp from Geisinger Medical Center, Scranton to I-81**

Although no representatives from the Geisinger Medical Center in Scranton attend this meeting; it was noted that the medical center had requested an on/off ramp directly to I-81 to their facility as they are a Level 2 Trauma Center with high volumes of ambulance traffic. This request is cost prohibitive and alternates being offered to the medical center include: upgrading the signal system and working with the city at future Harrison Avenue meetings for emergency preemption options for the signals.

### **Transportation Funding Bill**

Several items from the recently passed funding bill were discussed including that this legislation will invest an additional \$2.3 to \$2.4 billion into transportation by the fifth year of the plan. Partial funding for the new transportation package is being derived from the elimination of the flat 12-cent gas tax and modernizing an outdated transportation financing structure through the uncapping of the wholesale, Oil Company Franchise Tax. Mr. Baranski noted that counties are looking at an option to add up to \$5.00 to registration fees in order to fund local roads and bridges. Processes still need to be put in place to get those charges to the counties, and guidance on how the funds could be spent also needs to be put in place. It was noted that reports indicated once the gas tax comes off and the franchise tax increases; motorists will see a \$2.50 increase per week per driver in fuel costs.

It was noted that the \$2.3 billion will not be available in its entirety January 1, 2014. And that the permitting and review processes have not changed for projects. It was offered that the projects currently in line for the funding are on the TIP and Decade of Investment (DOI) and both can be found on PennDOT's website [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us) and clicking on the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program and DECADE OF INVESTMENT buttons respectively.

### **Pennsylvania Public Private Transportation Partnerships (P3)**

Pennsylvania Public Private Transportation Partnerships (P3) is a program that will allow PennDOT to replace bridges statewide for approximately fifty cents on the dollar or less. There are approximately 600 bridges statewide that are candidates for this program. The intention is to take these bridges to a contracting entity and have the bridges built over four years and then maintained for the next thirty years.

### **Hazleton Projects**

Ms. Palermo thanked PennDOT for all the great work Ms. Patty Fritsky has been doing with the Broad Street project in Hazleton. Ms. Palermo also highlighted a handout (attached) regarding

support for the Hazleton Route 424 Extension project, the Route 924 redesign project and the adaptive traffic signal for the Humboldt Industrial Park.

### **Walking/Bicycle Lane Montage Mountain Road**

MAP 21 has funding set for trails and passenger rail and the question was asked about using that funding for a walking/bicycle lane on Montage Mountain Road especially in light of the fatality of a pedestrian after a concert this past summer. It was noted that Montage Mountain Road is federally funded only to the stadium and widening the roadway or installation of barrier for a walking/bicycle lane would need to be put through the MPO project review system. It was noted that guidance for this funding allocation is forthcoming. It was recommended that the proposal for the project be submitted so it can be reviewed when funding guidance becomes available. Lackawanna County will submit the project proposal.

### **Airport Access Road**

The District will have the project manager on the Airport Access Road project make a presentation and update at the next Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Board meeting on December 19, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. After the initial presentation the project manager will attend the board meetings at regular intervals to provide progress reports on the project.

### **LLTS Coordinating Committee Secretary Adrian Merolli**

It was noted that the LLTS Coordinating Committee Secretary Adrian Merolli is retiring before the year's end. It was noted that he is the longest standing member of the MPO. He will certainly be missed and best wishes were expressed for him in his retirement.

### **Future Meetings**

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. and the next Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Pitoniak asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to adjourn the Technical Committee meeting was made by Nancy Snee, seconded by Alan Baranski, and carried.

Mr. Roberts asked for further questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to adjourn the Coordinating Committee meeting was made by Dominic Yannuzzi and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION  
STUDY MEETING - COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
December 4, 2013

	<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT AND NO PROXY</u>	<u>PROXY PRESENT</u>
George J. Roberts, P.E., Chairman	X		
James Arey, Central Office	X		
<u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
George Kelly	X		
James Wansacz (James Rodway – Permanent Proxy)	X		
<u>LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION</u>			
Adrian F. Merolli		X	
<u>CITY OF HAZLETON</u>			
Joseph Yannuzzi, Mayor (Dominic Yannuzzi – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>CITY OF SCRANTON</u>			
Chris Doherty, Mayor (John Pocius – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>CITY OF WILKES-BARRE</u>			
Thomas M. Leighton (Attilio “Butch” Frati – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
Robert Fiume		X	
<u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LUZERNE COUNTY</u>			
Stanley Strelish		X	
<u>AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE</u>			
Barry Centini		X	
<u>*PENNSYLVANIA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY</u>			
Larry Malski		X	
<u>*FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION</u>			
Dan Walston		X	
<u>*FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)</u>			
Timothy Lidiak		X	
<u>*FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION</u>			
Lori Pagnanelli		X	
*Non-Voting Members			

Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Meeting Transportation Advisory Committee  
Members Present:

Donna Palermo, Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce  
Craig Smith, AAA – North Penn  
Nina Waskevich, AAA – North Penn

Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Meeting Technical Committee Members Present:

Steve Pitoniak, Lackawanna County Planning Commission  
Debbie Noone, PennDOT District 4-0  
Nancy Snee, Luzerne County Planning Commission  
Corey O'Brien, Lackawanna County Commission  
Gary Cavill, Permanent Proxy for Lou Norella for Lackawanna County  
Attilio "Butch" Frati, Permanent Proxy for Thomas Leighton Mayor of Wilkes-Barre  
John Pocius, Permanent Proxy for Chris Doherty Mayor of Scranton  
Allan Baranski, Permanent Proxy for Jeff Box of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance  
Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office

Non-Members Present:

Frank Paczewski, State Transportation Commission  
Richard Cochrane, Anthracite Scenic Trails Association (ASTA)  
Matt Boyer, Commuter Services of Pennsylvania  
Stacy Newcomer, Commuter Services of Pennsylvania  
Beth Artman, Chair of Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership (SRTP)  
Gene Heyman, PennDOT Central Office Program Center  
Susan Hazelton, PennDOT District 4-0, Planning and Programming  
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0, Planning and Programming  
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0, Planning and Programming  
John Frankosky, PennDOT District 4-0, Planning and Programming  
Michael Taluto, PennDOT District 4-0, Community Relations  
Anna Fuhr, PennDOT District 4-0, Administration

## Route 424/924 Humboldt

The Humboldt Industrial Park is along SR Route 924 in Hazleton Township and has grown significantly over the last ten years resulting in severe traffic congestion at the Route 924/1-81 Interchange during the a.m. and p.m. peak hour. This situation is having a negative impact on CAN DO's ability to market several hundred acres of remaining parcels in the Humboldt, Humboldt North, Humboldt Northwest, and Humboldt Station, west of the 1-81 Interchange. In addition, marketing of a planned mixed use development just east of the Interchange (Cranberry Creek) is constrained by the same capacity issues.

With the recent passage of the Transportation Bill, the Decade of Investment includes the Route 424 new road extension project at a cost of \$20 million and the 1-81/924 Interchange southbound ramp project for \$12 million.

We strongly support moving forward immediately with the Route 424 project to provide congestion relief and to provide a second entrance/exit to Humboldt Industrial Park.

In addition, we also support the 1-81/Rt. 924 southbound ramp project to increase capacity at the 1-81/Rt. 924 Interchange, however, a recent traffic study commissioned by CAN DO concluded that the overall congestion at the Interchange will require additional ramp modifications which might be accommodated within the \$12MM budget. Recently, we became aware that a study of the 1-81/Rt. 924 Interchange has been included on the TIP for the Lackawanna/Luzerne County MPO. If this study moved forward as soon as possible, it could provide better guidance on how to implement congestion relief projects at the Interchange utilizing the \$12 million budgeted amount.

Several days after HB 1060 was passed, Secretary Barry Schoch stated in public remarks that optimization of signal systems would be a priority to relieve congestion as soon as possible. CAN DO's traffic consultant recommended consideration of "adaptive" signal technology along Route 924 to maximize the efficiency of the corridor and Interchange. We feel this type of project can be a short-term solution to peak hour capacity issues if coupled with a review of the policy regarding Level of Service(wait time) as the dominate factor for evaluating capacity issues versus safety. We ask the MPO to consider this approach to bridge the gap which will exist until the larger projects can be completed.

Submitted by:

Donna Palermo, President, Greater Hazleton Chamber of  
Commerce Kevin O'Donnell, President, CAN DO, Inc.