

**LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
**COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**July 20, 2016**

Members of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Committees:

Attached is a copy of the minutes of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting, held on July 20, 2016 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 (LLTS) Coordinating Committee was held on Wednesday, July 20, 2016 in Conference Room 233 of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation District Office in Dunmore, Pennsylvania.

Mr. James Arey, PennDOT Central Office Planning of the Coordinating Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and asked for self-introductions. Mr. Arey received a letter of proxy from Mr. George Roberts stating that Ms. Susan Hazelton will serve as his proxy; and a letter of proxy from Mr. George Kelly stating that Mr. Steve Pitoniak will serve as his proxy. (All permanent proxies are listed in the committee member list attached to these minutes.)

Mr. Arey stated for the record that in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Law and Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Steve Pitoniak, submitted the required public meeting notice, which appeared in local papers.

### **ITEM #1 – APRIL 20, 2016 LLTS COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Copies of the April 20, 2016 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes were sent out to all committee members. Mr. Arey asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Hearing none, a motion to approve the April 20, 2016 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes with the noted changes, was made by Steve Pitoniak, seconded by Dominic Yannuzzi, and carried.

### **ITEM #2 – 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) MODIFICATIONS & TRANSIT TIP MODIFICATIONS**

#### **2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Modifications**

Copies of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) modifications were sent out to all committee members. Ms. Bishop highlighted the modifications to the 2015-2018 TIP, as well as presented a project overview in a PowerPoint presentation, which included:

- Dallas 5-Leg project in Luzerne and the intersection of Upper Demunds Road and State Route (SR 309) – the projects were bid together in May 2016 with a three-year construction season. Mr. Pedri noted that a business owner has contacted the Luzerne County Office stating he was not informed of the project status. Mr. Pedri will be providing the District with contact information to ensure the business owner has all the public information already provided and will be informed of future public meetings for the project.
- Adding local funds for the reimbursement agreement for Interstate 81 off ramp at Exit 175 in Luzerne, as well as increasing the construction phase.
- Adding SR 2103 Bridge Removal by the Turnpike Commission over Interstate 81 in Luzerne
- Adding preliminary engineering phase to county owned bridge on Fourth Street in Clifton Township in Lackawanna
- Advance construction on a federal aid paving project to and increase to meet the low bid amount in Lackawanna

Highlighted modifications to the 2015-2018 TIP continued:

- Advance construction on SR 239 Bridge Replacement project to bid early and match estimate in Luzerne
- Increase construction phase to process work orders on the Harrison Avenue Bridge project in Lackawanna
- Advance construction phase on the Kennedy Drive Safety Improvement project and decrease construction phase to match estimate bid on July 14, 2016
- Continuance of Cable Median Barrier on the Casey Highway in Lackawanna
- Upgrade existing signal projects – Greenridge Street and Capouse Avenue intersection in Lackawanna and SR 309 and Carverton Road intersection in Luzerne
- Adding the Interstate 81 Cable Median Barrier project through Wilkes-Barre and West Hazelton in Luzerne

Ms. Bishop noted that the TIP changes were modifications not amendments and would not require a vote. Mr. Arey thanked Ms. Bishop for adding the presentation showing the projects with the funding and schedule changes, noting it gives a better sense of what is being done in the District and with the planning partners. Mr. Smoker echoed appreciation for the presentation.

Mr. Ferry asked regarding in general but pertinent to the Dallas Five Points project is if the Department considers utilizing the easement properties, for this and similar projects, for park-and-ride projects that seem to make sense once the original project is complete, a park-and-ride project could be part of a “folding into” the completed project with that easement acquisition. Ms. Hazelton noted that there are a number of park-and-ride project ongoing in the LLTS right now. Additional sites for park-and-ride projects for review and consideration continue to be submitted and they include Courtdale, Luzerne Borough and off of Route 309. In addition the Department reviews current property that it has from roadway realignment and improvement projects to determine if a park-and-ride would be a feasible project in that area.

It was also noted that the Dallas Five Points Park-and-Ride proposed project would be a good candidate for the Long Range Plan and TIP update. Mr. Pitoniak noted that with the new 360 project review process more types of these additions may come into future project design and budgeting.

Mr. Pedri asked for the status of the Division Street Bridge in Wilkes-Barre with PennDOT. Mr. Frati noted that the bridge was county owned at one time and efforts to transfer the bridge to the City of Wilkes-Barre had been unsuccessful. The County of Luzerne and City of Wilkes-Barre will meet and re-determine ownership to have the bridge added to the appropriate program in order to have it on the Long Range Plan and funded through the TIP.

### **Transit TIP Modifications**

#### **County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS)**

Mr. Fiume noted that COLTS is modifying state fiscal year 2013/2014 Transit 5339 to state fiscal year 2016/2017 transit funds in order for COLTS to purchase Pressured Natural Gas busses. The funding has already been approved and the busses have been ordered, but they will

not be delivered (paid for) until the 2016/2017 state fiscal year. This will be a modification to the draft 2017 Transit Tip for \$627,976.

### **Luzerne County Transit Authority (LCTA)**

Ms. Bednarek noted that a modification is needed to process a grant on the TIP for surveillance camera purchase the modification would move the funding to a current TIP project number.

Mr. Arey asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the committee moved to the next order of business – the 2017-2020 TIP Public Comment Period and Approval of the FFY 2017-2020 TIP – Highway and Transit.

### **ITEM #3 –2017-2020 TIP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & APPROVAL OF THE FFY 2017-2020 TIP – HIGHWAY & TRANSIT**

Mr. Pitoniak noted that all documents for the 2017-2020 Highway and Transit TIP public comment period and approval were sent out per federal regulations. The documents were all sent to public libraries in both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties; to the Spanish Ethnicity Center in Hazleton; Nine Indian Tribes (as listed by PennDOT and FHWA) via email. The documents were out for public comment June 25, 2016 for review until July 25, 2016. The documents included: the LLTS TIP, the statewide TIP, the interstate TIP, the state TIP, the three transit agencies' financial capacities documents and their TIPs, the MPO Self Certification, the MPO Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that because of a glitch the documents should have been advertised on June 18, 2016 to meet the Coordinating Committee's meeting date by the 30 days mandated for public review. The normal public comment period for this MPO is 35 days and that is why the comment period will be closing five days beyond this meeting.

It was noted that to date there has been no public comment submissions. All the library documentation had forms that could be filled out and telephone contact as well as email contact information to comment on the material. The committee chose to vote on the package today contingent upon any comments received and any changes that may be required to address those comments. Mr. Pitoniak noted that many of the documents have been updated to reflect the latest funding bills that been passed for transportation and will ensure the appropriate bills are listed in the documents.

Included in the packet is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Statewide Procedures For 2015-2018 STIP and TIP Modifications.

Mr. Smoker summarized the STIP process for changes and funding items. Mr. Pedri asked how do we change what is being approved today if priorities change. Mr. Arey noted that it would be best for everyone to bring projects and information to the MPO and local PennDOT in order to fall within the learning curve for the two-year cycle. Mr. Arey and Mr. Smoker noted that all the questions pertaining to the STIP, TIP and MOU are excellent questions and there are many resources and meetings that will help explain the "How to..." for these documents and processes. Additionally, meetings can be scheduled to provide more information to the planning partners and committee members who are new to the process.

Mr. Arey asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to approve the 2017-2020 TIP Highway and Bridge Components and Transit TIPs (all documents) contingent upon completion of the public comment period and addressing any comments received, there will then be an email confirmation sent out to the Coordinating Committee at the conclusion of the public comment period, was made by Steve Pitoniak, seconded by Bob Fiume, and carried.

#### **ITEM #4 – SELF-CERTIFICATION RESOLUTION**

Mr. Arey noted that the MPO Self-Certification Resolution is part of the requirements that need to be a part of the TIP submissions. Mr. Pitoniak noted that this also was updated to reflect the latest funding bills that been passed for transportation.

Mr. Arey asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to adopt the Self-Certification Resolution, was made by Dominic Yannuzzi, seconded by Susan Hazelton, and carried.

#### **ITEM #5 – OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **State Route (SR) 424 – Addition to Federal Aid System**

Mr. Michael Cera, P.E. of Alfred Benesch and Company handed out copies of the presentation on adding SR 424 in Hazle Township Luzerne County to the Federal Aid System. It was noted that this is a required step for the process and that the roadways current classification as a Rural Arterial would change to an Urban Major Collection. The speed limit would be reduced from 50 mph to 35 mph. The project will provide a secondary and emergency access between Interstate 81 and Humboldt Industrial Park as well as additional incident management for local roadways.

Mr. Ferry voiced his concern of queuing onto the interstate with signals installed on the off-ramps. It was noted that there will be detectors in the roadway as well as video detectors and the ramps will be widened to accommodate turning lanes. Mr. Ferry also noted that SR 424 is commonly used by pedestrians and bicyclists and at the end of SR 424 where it intersects with Route 92 Hazelton's Rail Trail trailhead that could be incorporated into the project. It was noted that the project is not currently designed for the rail trail integration but it can be added in the future or part an upcoming project.

Mr. Smoker noted that through the Unified Planning Work Plan (UPWP) the MPO could prioritize where to spend money logistically for bicycle/pedestrian projects. Looking at a standalone bicycle/pedestrian plan so that the entire region is mapped and the information is available for when a project moves into that area. This effort could also be done as a separate project with sponsors and planning partners to have these types of projects shovel ready when funding becomes available.

Mr. Smoker noted that a vote is needed to add SR 424 to the Federal Aid System because federal requirements are that in order to get environmental clearance for a project utilizing federal funds the project has to be shown as fully funded. In order to show that it is fully funded it has to be eligible for federal funds. Currently, this road is not on the federal aid system and is not eligible

for federal funds. The action today is proposing to add SR 424 to the Federal Aid System and once the proposal is approved to be eligible; once that is approved funding can be set for the environmental clearance on the Long Range Plan or TIP. Mr. Arey noted that after the proposal approval at the MPO level; it will be submitted to the PennDOT to forward to FHWA for approvals.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that this MPO has not updated their functional class map or National Highway System map since before the last census, the federal government looks to having these updated after every census. This is one of the tasks committed to under the UPWP to review the functional class system and the National Highway System and determine where changes are needed throughout the MPO.

Mr. Arey asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to support and forward the proposal to add State Route 424 in Hazle Township in Luzerne County to the Federal Aid System, was made by David Pedri, seconded by Butch Frati, and carried.

### **Repurposing Earmarks**

Mr. Roberts noted that back with the appropriations bill in 2016 the FHWA gave the states the ability to use old earmarks, set aside monies dedicated to specific projects, as repurposed funding on projects within a 50-mile radius of the original project the earmark was designated for. Utilizing these funds frees up highway funding in the area to be used on other projects. It was noted that statewide there were 102 projects with earmarks with approximately \$101 million.

The plan developed with the Districts, Central Office PennDOT and FHWA is to utilize the funding on currently ongoing projects and release the regular federal highway funds to be used at a later time. Mr. Arey noted that this means the funding type will change in order to utilize the earmarks instead of turning them back to the federal government as this was done in the past since the earmarks could not be used on any projects other than the ones they were originally set to. It was noted that the earmark repurposing can only be done once and that once the decision is set to put that funding on a project it will remain there or the funding will be lost. This frees up monies for the 2017 TIP as the MPO moves forward with potential projects.

Mr. Frati asked if these were projects (for whatever reason) that were not completed by the municipalities. It was noted that many projects fell into the pattern of being a \$200,000 project with \$160,000 federal earmark with \$40,000 local match. A local match of this magnitude is difficult for any municipality to raise such a significant amount for the local match. Reviewing the list of earmarks and what they are to be repurposed for, shows a Luzerne County project with a \$2.8 million earmark with the obligation to date at \$2.5 million, not knowing what specific project it is, how would it be determined that remaining earmark couldn't still be used for that project. Mr. Smoker noted that most of these projects with remaining earmark funds reflects projects that have been completed and may have had cost savings. These cost savings still part of the earmark could not be spent on any other project and sit assigned to the original project.

The question as to all the available earmarked monies for Luzerne County would be going to the Upper Demunds project. It was noted that the State's agenda is to reallocate the funding by August 29, 2016 and to obligate the funds. One of the reasons Upper Demunds was selected is it

is under construction and the timeframe available to utilize the earmark funds made Upper Demunds the best candidate for this funding. This frees up regular federal funding that has a more flexible timeframe for use. The funding freed up by repurposing the earmarks remains within the region. Formerly, moving or reassigning earmark funds took legislative action for each earmark and is a very onerous process. The funding can only be repurposed once and must be allocated / spent within the next two years.

### **June 2016 Planning Partners' Meeting**

Mr. Ferry noted the Planning Partners' meeting was useful and enjoyable (as a first time attendee). It was good to meet their statewide peers and great learning experience. Mr. Arey noted that every year the Department tries to have two Planning Partners' meeting statewide which didn't not happen last fall because of budget issues. The Department tries to bring relevant topics to the table. Presentations from the Secretary of Transportation and FHWA show the high level goals and give direction to reach expectations. There was an enormous amount of information provided at this meeting since there was only the spring meeting last year. Better communications is one item that came out of this meeting and bi-monthly webinars are being planned. Currently, task forces will be created for rule-making a nearly every aspect of the planning processes. An October Planning Partners' meeting is being organized for more attendance availability.

Mr. Pitoniak reiterated that the June 2016 meeting was packed full of excellent presentations and information which is usually broken out between the two meetings (spring and fall) per year. Mr. Pitoniak noted that right now to get a project on the plan it starts with filling out a form for Linking Planning and NEPA. A level one form is filled out and submitted for review and comment, then a level two form is filled out for more information and date for review and comment and then to a level three form. It is a very cumbersome process and many of projects that are bicycle / pedestrian projects seem to be looked at the end of this project submission process because of the complexity. With the Secretary's 360 process the bicycle / pedestrian aspects may be brought into review along with other consideration earlier in the process that may be more simplified for future submissions. Another issue is the truss bridge issue across the Commonwealth. The truss bridges that were built in the 1900's that can no longer carry the loads they're supposed to be carrying. The Department has been trying to replace those bridges but many of them are historic. Since many of them still have enough integrity to be used under less strenuous circumstances the Department is looking to repurpose the truss bridges moving them to rail-trail projects. Lackawanna County does not have any truss bridges that fall into this category but Luzerne County has a few. Mr. Pitoniak noted that many of these are not looked at in planning process for reutilizing these bridges on rail-trail type projects.

Mr. Arey noted that the 360 process is a culture change for the Department so many times when looking at a project one of the first things is there is not enough money for a project or enough to add in a bike lane or pedestrian facility. Looking at these items sooner will require having that local information available to be included in the process. In addition, the Department is also looking at having a Planner for every District across the state.

Mr. Pitoniak suggested that as in the past, Planning Partners' meetings were held at different locations across the state to ensure more local regional attendance as some planners farther away

from central Pennsylvania have not been in attendance at the recent meetings. This would also help make the Planning Partners' more aware of needs around the state. Mr. Arey noted that issues with getting hotels and conference facility bids make it difficult to get the needed space and still be on the preferred hotel list, but he will take the suggestion back to Central Office.

Mr. Smoker noted that from the Planning Partners' meeting with the planning and engineering programs and the 360 process the Secretary alluded that she is a planner, and Mr. Smoker's boss has a background in planning. Having both females and planners the consideration for projects may turn from what you want out of a program to what you need, what do you have planned for your municipalities and PennDOT TIP funding. Driving home the need for more planning on all levels of government from the municipality all the way up and how to coordinate it, which may be answered by the environmental 360 process.

### **Transportation Planning Rules**

Mr. Smoker noted that FHWA and FTA finalized the transportation planning rules. This governs statewide metropolitan and non-metropolitan transportation processes. This includes requirements for TIPs, Long Range Plans and the Unified Planning Work Plan. This was finalized at the end of May 2016. The final rules that govern the planning process are in place; some items will not be fully implemented until other rulemaking regarding performance measures is finalized. MAP-21 and FAST Act continue to change the planning process to be more performance driven, data base, outcome base planning approach. Safety rulemaking came out early this spring. Bridge and pavement rulemaking are being finalized. Rulemaking for congestion and freight is still out for public comment and should be finalized by the end of the year.

At the end of June the USDOT Secretary, FHWA and FTA issued notice of rulemaking MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform. This is out for a 60-day public comment period to get it finalized by the end of the year. Impacts to the MPOs include where urbanized areas overlaps or bleeds into other planning areas and counties. Where these overlaps occur and there are multiple planning organizations doing the planning for an urbanized area one TIP and one Long Range Plan for each area, in addition to the TIP and Long Range Plan that for those planning organizations. The comment period ends August 26, 2016 and all are encouraged to participate. The document is 12 to 14 pages. Many questions from the initial presentation were not answered, but put on the docket which is the regular process for all questions and comments to be reviewed and addressed once compiled. It was noted that several planning organizations will have three or more TIPs. Alternate to additional TIP needs would be to change the borders of the planning areas to ensure there are no overlaps or bleeds.

### **Meeting Schedule**

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

The next Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Arey asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to adjourn the LLTS Coordinating Committee meeting was made by Steve Pitoniak, seconded by Susan Hazelton and the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.



LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION  
STUDY MEETING - COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
July 20, 2016

	<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT &amp; NO PROXY</u>	<u>PROXY PRESENT</u>
<u>PENNDOT</u>			
George J. Roberts, P.E., Chairman			X
James Arey, Central Office	X		
<u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
George Kelly			X
Vacant		X	
<u>LUZERNE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION</u>			
C. David Pedri, Acting County Manager – (James Ferry – Permanent Proxy)	X		
<u>CITY OF HAZLETON</u>			
Jeffrey L. Cusat, Mayor - (Dominic Yannuzzi – Permanent Proxy & Committee Vice-Chair)			X
<u>CITY OF SCRANTON</u>			
William Courtright, Mayor – (John Pocius – Permanent Proxy)		X	
<u>CITY OF WILKES-BARRE</u>			
Anthony George, Mayor (Attilio “Butch” Frati – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
Robert Fiume	X		
<u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LUZERNE COUNTY</u>			
Norm Gavlick – (Kathy Bednarek – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE</u>			
Carl Beardsley		X	
<u>*PENNSYLVANIA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY</u>			
Larry Malski		X	
<u>*FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION</u>			
Matthew Smoker	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 Technical Committee Members Present:

Steve Pitoniak, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission, Tech. Comm. Chair  
Susan Hazelton PennDOT district 4-0  
Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office Planning

Non-Members Present:

Chris Chapman, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission  
Jim Ferry, Luzerne County Planning  
Daniel Butch, Luzerne County Planning  
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning  
John Frankosky, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning  
Anna Fuhr, PennDOT District 4-0 Administration  
Michael Taluto, PennDOT District 4-0 Community Relations  
Matt Pettinato, PennDOT District 4-0 Design  
Mike Cera, Benesch  
Jeff DeAngelo, Benesch