

LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY
COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING
October 19, 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 October 19, 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, October 19, 2016 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 10:10 a.m. Mr. Roberts received a letter of proxy from Mr. James Arey stating that Mr. Dean Roberts will serve as his proxy; and a letter of proxy from 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.)

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

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

Copies of the July 20, 2016 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes were sent out to all committee members and are available on the new LLTS website. Mr. Roberts asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Hearing none, a motion to approve the July 20, 2016 Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study Coordinating Committee meeting minutes was made by Steve Pitoniak, seconded by David Pedri, and carried.

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

2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Modifications

Copies of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) modifications were sent out to all committee members. Mr. Fisher highlighted the modifications to the 2015-2018 TIP, which included:

- The basic end of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) adjustments
- Added preliminary engineering to State Route (SR) 309 over Laurel Run Creek in Luzerne
- Added four Act 13 project to ensure Marcellus Shale funding is ion the TIP for structurally deficient bridge repairs
- Earmark redistribution items as discussed at the July MPO meetings
- Increased construction on Rockwell Avenue Bridge in Lackawanna for contamination, modified bridge design and environmental monitoring and mitigation
- Funding swap from Wayne County to the LLTS to advance the construction phase of SR 1012 slide and SR 29 over Harvey’s Creek (both in Luzerne) – the funding swap allowed these two projects to be bid early and prior to the FFY closing
- Addressed an Accrued Unbilled Cost (AUC) on the construction phase of SR 239 over Shickshinny Creek in Luzerne
- Increased the construction phase on the Sydney Street Bridge in Luzerne to pay the final invoices

Highlighted modifications to the 2015-2018 TIP continued:

- Added preliminary engineering phase to the Daleville Park and Ride in Lackawanna for lighting design. This project is slated to be bid by the of this calendar year

Mr. Fisher noted that the TIP changes were modifications not amendments and would not require a vote.

2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment

Mr. Fisher noted that the SR 309 Bridge over SR 2004 in Luzerne was slated for bid in 2015 and was scheduled on the 2015 TIP. Due to some delays with railroad coordination and additional deterioration found the project slid and needs to be added to 2017 TIP. The project is the ramp work on the bridge over the Susquehanna River. It was noted that the funding will not require another project on the 2017 TIP to be deferred as projects do get flexed to be moved sooner or later in the program depending on bidding needs and circumstances.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion to adopt the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment moving the SR 309 Bridge project from the 2015 TIP to the 2017 TIP, was made by Dean Roberts, seconded by Butch Frati, and carried.

ITEM #3 – METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) COORDINATION AND REFORM

Dean noted that this past summer USDOT issued a notice to propose a rulemaking change across the country. This requires any urban area that shares MPO boundaries would now have to be coordinated by one MPO. LLTS shares boundaries with NEPA MPO and SEDA-COG MPO, both of which share urban areas. The new rulemaking would require all three to be one MPO; the problem is that following this direction the state could find itself covered by one MPO. Originally USDOT provided for a sixty-day comment period which has been amended to a ninety date. PennDOT's comments basically mirrored the local MPOs and neighboring states DOT comments.

Generally, the comments request that the rulemaking be withdrawn and these comments included: PennDOT's Planning infrastructure is well established and all urban areas aptly covered by an MPO or RPO and that it should be a State's right to map and delineate MPO and RPO areas. USDOT has responded to Pennsylvania requesting more detailed information on the rulemaking withdrawal request. USDOT is looking for more details on why; details on exceptions to how this rule would not work and also how this would be more costly. It was noted that some MPOs have provided information showing a 40 to 60% increase in UPWP expenses for all the required changes (documents, policies, by-laws, voting structures, etc.).

Mr. Pitoniak reiterated the comment period change and also noted that LLTS coordinated with NEPA and Lehigh Valley with a letter of opposition citing many issues within the state. The legislation as read would have LLTS part of an MPO that covered an area north of Boston to south of Richmond and extend out passed Cleveland. Project prioritization, needs and logistics would be too far apart to be agreed upon within the new MPO parameters.

It was noted that nationwide, there is 528 pages of comments that need to be addressed a number of which are duplicates but still require a response. It was also noted that most Pennsylvania legislators have written opposition letters to this rulemaking. Mr. Morgan reinforced that Congressman Cartwright and Congressman Dent have sent opposition letters and noted there is a coordinated effort to have the rulemaking looked at more closely. It was also noted that this seems to have stemmed from a couple urban areas in North Carolina and Florida that have not handled equitably within their planning systems. Addressing this discrepancy came to the forefront since the US Secretary of Transportation is from Charlotte and it was noted that this is a good issue to cover and needs to be addressed, but the direction taken to cover underserved areas should not conflict with states' procedures that are already successful ensuring all areas are equitably handled.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the committee moved to the next order of business – the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) website.

ITEM #4 – METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) WEBSITE

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) website is live at www.lltsmpo.com. Mr. Chapman gave the committee a tour of the website live, noting newsletters, Quick Links, meetings and documents. The website still may have a few glitches any problems user encounter should be sent to Daniel Butch at Daniel.Butch@luzernecounty.org, Chris Chapman at ChapmanCh@lackawannacounty.org, or Steven Fisher at stfisher@pa.gov. It was noted that Lackawanna County is working out email issues that have prevented delivery of meeting reminders to a number of committee members. It was noted that Blackout Design was the website designer. It was noted the website is very user and friendly and the committee noted its appreciation for the work Mr. Chapman and the planning partners put into the website. The annual list of federal obligations will be added to the website as well as the latest TIP modifications.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the committee moved to the next order of business – Upcoming TIP Projects.

ITEM #5 – UPCOMING TIP PROJECTS

Mr. Chapman noted that this agenda item is to provide more information sharing. Providing a map of projects let from late August through September up to the end of the calendar year.

These projects included:

- MPMS 74749 – Susquehanna Avenue, Erie Avenue, and Second Street in West Pittston, Streetscape Improvements in Luzerne – Let date August 25, 2016
- MPMS 104323 – Wilkes University Streetscape Improvements in Luzerne – Let date September 15, 2016
- MPMS 67299 – SR 29 Over Harvey's Creek in Luzerne – Let date September 29, 2016
- MPMS 96931 – SR 1012 (Chase Road), Jackson Township, Slide Repair in Luzerne Let date September 29, 2016

Upcoming TIP projects continued:

- MPMS 80754 – SR 309 (Memorial Highway) Kingston Township, Slope Repair and Restoration in Luzerne – Let date October 20, 2016
- MPMS 67344 – SR 3021 (North Old Turnpike Road) Over Nescopeck Creek, Butler Township in Luzerne – Let date November 3, 2016
- MPMS 9026 – SR 4007 (McKendree Road) Over Shickshinny Creek, Union Township in Luzerne – Let date December 1, 2016
- MPMS 9085 – SR 1061 (Jackson Road) Over Harvey’s Creek, Lehman Township in Luzerne – Let date December 1, 2016
- MPMS 97839 – SR 307 (Scranton Pocono Highway) @ I-380 Exit 20, Covington Township, Daleville Park and Ride in Lackawanna – Let date December 1, 2016
- MPMS 102906 – Carbondale Riverwalk, John Street to Morse Avenue along SR 171 (Main Street) in Lackawanna – Let date December 15, 2016

Ms. Bednarek asked what the Wilkes University Streetscape project entailed. It was noted that this is a \$1.3 million project that includes sidewalk repairs, crossing improvements, lighting, pedestrian safety and traffic calming.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the committee moved to the next order of business – Adoption of the 2017 TYP.

ITEM #6 – ADOPTION OF THE 2017 TYP

Dean noted that the 2017 TYP was adopted statewide on September 28, 2016. FHWA did write letters to the MPOs that were closer to a self-certification review comment letters. The letters included recommendations to be more in line on a day-to-day basis with the UPWP; work to get away from “rubber-stamping” project approvals; and improvements to the public participation plans. The letter is available for review for anyone who would like to review it and the MPO can add it to the website.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that the letter from FHWA does resemble a self-certification letter and that the MPO has addressed many of the comments with the website. The MPO is waiting on Federal Transit to supply the draft certification from May 2016. Other items such as publication of meeting times are also being addressed. Mr. Roberts noted that this meeting the limited English proficiency information is on the table by the sign-in sheet. Mr. Pitoniak noted that the website under meetings refers special needs attendees to the District Office so preparations can be set for their attendance.

Mr. Roberts asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, the committee moved to the next order of business – Recap of October Planning Partners’ Meeting.

ITEM #7 – RECAP OF OCTOBER PLANNING PARTNERS’ MEETING

A fall planning partners’ meeting was held on October 11 and 12, 2016. Mr. Roberts highlighted some of the train and programs presented at the meeting.

Planning Partner meeting items included:

- Upcoming 360 Training in PennDOT District 3 which leans toward the Secretary's PennDOT Connects program
- PennDOT Connects mission is getting municipalities involved earlier in the TIP projects (prior to preliminary engineering phases)
 - * Including trail connections, pedestrian movements and possibly drainage issues. This will be mandatory by July of 2017 to ensure all new/current projects go through the PennDOT Connects process. This also encompasses the 2019 TIP which should be under review starting this December. Looking to adopt a formal process to have municipalities be able to look at these projects and tie into their Master Plan.
 - * GIS plotting has been recommended to see where a couple projects may fall within the same communities to be able to talk about all the projects and possible tie ins to the projects at the same meeting
 - * Two or three projects need to be chosen by the MPOs to pilot with PennDOT to begin this process
- Transportation Budget was discussed, the motor license fund, construction accounts, the maintenance allocation and how everything ties together through the budget process.
 - * The maintenance allocation has been flat over the last ten years at \$1.3 billion and this allocation will remain flat for the next eight years.
 - * Many of these issues are connected to the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) issues. Legislation currently has the PSP funding locked at \$802 million being taken out of the motor license fund. Over the next ten years it will lower down to \$500 million maximum. This is a good thing for transportation because that translates to getting approximately \$30 million more per year. The Secretary has been working with legislators to continue to reduce the PSP portion of the motor license fund to grow the maintenance budget
 - * Gas taxes, through Act 89 the last tax will come in on January 1, 2017.
 - * Last one-third capping of the oil franchise tax
 - * Liquid fuels increase up to 40 to 60% through the life of the bill.
 - * County \$5.00 registration fee – it was noted Luzerne County is looking to this for transportation needs on roadways and bridges
 - * Multimodal funding applications submission period is still open – it was noted that the Governor had just announce the last rounds recipients and LLTS had four successful funding recipients (Crystal Window and Door Systems – \$2,100,000; Heritage Valley Partners – \$463,179; City of Pittston – \$372,606; Greater Wilkes-Barre Industrial Fund – \$800,000). The current round for multimodal funding applications closes December 16, 2016. It was noted guidelines have not been provided for submissions yet. It was noted that this round was announced via press release and additional information can be found at PennDOT website, www.penndot.gov.
- Pennsylvania Freight System – asking MPOs to identify critical rural freight networks as well as critical urban freight networks – PowerPoint is available to see what is currently designated as freight networks. It was noted that LLTS and Northeast Planning Alliance (NEPA) have had discussions regarding updating the functional class map to tie into the freight networks and looking at Central Office PennDOT for training and guidance in making the updates, sometime in mid to late November.
- Changes to the Green Light Go program included the change 50/50 funding match to 80% state and 20% local funding match. Adding local highways as candidate roadways

Planning Partner meeting items continued:

- Endeca and the Scorecard of Influence – Endeca is a computer program that helps analyze other data – the program is available to the Department and Planning Partners. The program take the TIP and breaks down spending into pie charts to see where funds are being spent and compare them to the recommendations on the Scorecard of Influence. The Scorecard of Influence looks at, for example, what goals for non-interstate bridges at PennDOT the goal is 5.5% structurally deficient bridge; depending on how far above or below the region is of this goal the recommendation would be to spend more or less money on bridges. Items that are not currently on the listing (under on) is reconstruction of roadways and (over on) capacity adding projects. The region is in line with the bridge goals.
- P3 Webinar – Scheduled for October 27, 2016. There will be several speakers that will include Pennsylvania Transportation Secretary Leslie Richards and the Department’s P3 Director Mike Bonini.

It was noted that the 360 training and P3 webinars will help reduce PennDOT’s approach to cookie-cutter meetings with rural municipalities. One size does not fit all consider a number of rural municipalities full time personnel are a secretary that may work in the office three hours a day three days of the week. This will help put the processing together to have the appropriate municipal representatives through borough and township association meeting to be included in project planning.

It was noted that if grant program submissions windows were scheduled consistently within the same time frame from year to year; more candidates may be submitted because preparation times and deadlines would be known ahead of the closing dates. It was also noted that Planning and Programming has been working to improve timing and cycle consistency.

Dean noted that through an After Action Review one of the items to be addressed is moving up the development schedule for the 2019 program. Looking have some of the general procedural work groups and financial work groups have their first meetings December of this year and January of next year.

It was noted that the last few Planning Partners’ meetings have been in central Pennsylvania and that moving the meetings to different areas of the Commonwealth, as practiced when the partner meetings began, would be beneficial. Outlying regional representative would be more apt to attend meeting closer to their location. And, information sharing between the different planning organizations who may not currently attend the centralized planning meeting would also help bolster consistency in best practices across the Commonwealth.

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

ITEM #8 – OTHER BUSINESS

SR 424 Functional Class – Mr. Pitoniak noted that the request for SR 424 to be added to the functional class system has been approved by FHWA.

Multimodal Project

Mr. Bob Morgan, District Director, Economic Development Specialist of Congressman Matt Cartwright's office gave an update on a grant application through the Pennsylvania Northeast Railroad. Under the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) with legislation to authorize to target grants. These grants are designed to assist old coal region areas. There is a large allocation of funding for moving economic development plans forward. The Congressman is looking at restoring passenger rail service from New York City to the City of Scranton. In 2007 a feasibility study was completed and now needs to be updated along with the design and cost estimates. The MPO has authorized a \$10,000 line item in the budget to assist this grant. Mr. Morgan asked if there was any agility in flexing this amount upward to \$25,000; and noted that a funding commitment letter is needed for the grant application submission in November. The commitment letter would be addressed to the Pennsylvania Northeast Railroad Authority (PNRRA). This would be a \$150,000 match for a \$300,000 grant.

Mr. Pedri noted that Luzerne County supports this project and Mr. Pitoniak noted that Lackawanna County supports this effort as well and supports an increase to \$25,000 for the line item. This is a long running project that the MPO has been coordinating with with the five counties in Lackawanna and Monroe in Pennsylvania and the three counties affected in New Jersey. Coordination began in 1983. Concerns include the mechanism on how the funding would be transferred to the project. Central Office Planning will work on the method and any needed agreements to provide the funding to the railroad who would be the lead agency and the monies would be moved to PNRRA.

Local Road Turn-Backs

Mr. Ferry noted that Luzerne County is looking for funding for roadway projects in several municipalities. Some of which the municipalities have shown interest in taking the roads over once they have been repaired. A meeting will be set to coordinate a meeting that includes Lackawanna County. On the TIP there is a line item for K-Routes (\$400,000 for Lackawanna County and \$400,000 for Luzerne County). A meeting is needed to understand what funding is available and what is needed for roadway turn-backs. It was noted the roads need to be on federal aid system. The funding is 80/20 match.

Projects in Construction

Mr. Pitoniak noted that he has received a number of compliments regarding work on several projects including Main Avenue and the O'Neill Highway and he noted that he reminds people that this is the gas tax / Act 89. The Central Scranton Expressway remains at only two lanes and traffic congestion or traffic backups have lessened as motorists have gotten used to the pattern.

Meeting Schedule

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

The next Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

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

LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION
STUDY MEETING - COORDINATING COMMITTEE
October 19, 2016

	<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT & NO PROXY</u>	<u>PROXY PRESENT</u>
<u>PENNDOT</u>	X		
George J. Roberts, P.E., Chairman			
James Arey, Central Office			X
<u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
George Kelly			X
Patrick O'Malley		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
Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office Planning

Non-Members Present:

Bob Morgan, District Director, Economic Dev. Specialist, Congressman Matt Cartwright
Chris Chapman, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission
Jim Ferry, Luzerne County Planning
Daniel Butch, Luzerne County Planning
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning
John Frankosky, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning
Anna Fuhr, PennDOT District 4-0 Administration