

LACKAWANNA COUNTY
Government Center at the Globe
123 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503



LUZERNE COUNTY
Penn Place
20 North Pennsylvania Ave
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE
LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION STUDY
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE COMBINED TECHNICAL
AND COORDINATING COMMITTEES
April 15, 2020

Members:

Following are the draft minutes of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS) public meeting of the Combined Technical and Coordinating Committees, held 10:00 AM on April 15, 2020 by WebEx virtual conferencing and phone conferencing.

Please check for errors or omissions.

Thank you.

The LLTS Combined Technical and Coordinating Committees meeting was held by WebEx virtual conferencing and phone conferencing on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. The webinar was hosted and facilitated by John Petrini of the Luzerne County staff.

Mr. Petrini welcomed everyone. He led the roll call of members and asked all other participants to identify themselves.

Proxy representatives noted to be in attendance included:

(for the Coordinating Committee):

- Steve Pitoniak for Brenda Sacco, Member from Lackawanna County
- Alan Wufsus for Jeffrey Cusat, Member from City of Hazleton
- John Pocius for Paige Cagnetti, Member from City of Scranton
- Butch Frati for George Brown, Member from City of Wilkes-Barre
- Kathy Bednarek for Lee Horton, Luzerne County Transit Member

(for the Technical Committee):

- Butch Frati for George Brown, Member from City of Wilkes-Barre
- John Pocius for Paige Cagnetti, Member from City of Scranton
- Kathy Bednarek for Lee Horton, Luzerne County Transit Member
- Alan Baranski for Jeff Box, Northeast Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance Member

A full list of committee members, proxies, and non-member attendees is appended to these minutes.

Steve Pitoniak stated for the record that he did advertise that the Technical and Coordinating Committees would meet in a combined session today in accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Law and Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Ads were placed in advance of the meeting in the Times-Tribune and Citizens' Voice newspapers advising the members and the public how to access the meeting remotely.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that a new bill passed by the State legislature in response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic is expected to be signed by the Governor soon and go into effect retroactively. The new law is expected to allow local governing bodies to meet remotely (not necessarily in person) and to conduct business with or without achieving a quorum so long as plans for remote meetings are advertised in advance.

ITEM #1: PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pitoniak invited anyone from the general public to provide comments. There was no commentary from the public.

ITEM #2A: APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

In his capacity as Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr. Pitoniak suggested each committee consider a vote to adopt the minutes from their last combined meeting held January 8, 2020, unless members had edit suggestions. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve of the minutes as distributed.

John Pocius made a motion on behalf of the Technical Committee to adopt the minutes. This was seconded by Butch Frati. Mr. Pitoniak called for a vote and the vote was unanimous.

As Chair of the Coordinating Committee, David Pedri entertained a motion to approve the minutes. This was offered by Bob Fiume and seconded by Alan Wufsus. Mr. Pedri called for a vote and the vote was unanimous.

ITEM #2B – TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Mr. Pitoniak brought the group's attention to the current TIP which was sent out to committee members in advance of the meeting, and may be viewed here:

<http://www.lltsmpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/April-2020-Actions.pdf>

Another document – also shared in advance – highlights current administrative actions:

<http://www.lltsmpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2019-LLTS-TIP-April-2020.pdf>

Steve Fisher explained that these actions do not require a vote of endorsement from the committees. These are modifications which involve moving funding due to cost shifts, project schedules, etc.

However, there is an amendment that does require a vote. The amendment comprises construction/ paving of Stauffer Road in Lackawanna County and involves the use of federal and local funds. Details of the amendment were also sent to committee members in advance, and may be viewed here:

<http://www.lltsmpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Stauffer-Amendment.xlsx>

He then called for a motion to approve of the motion. Mr. Frati made a motion to endorse the Stauffer Road amendment on behalf of the Technical Committee. This was seconded by Mr. Pocius, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Pedri then called for a motion to approve of the motion. Mr. Fiume made a motion to endorse the amendment on behalf of the Coordinating Committee. This was seconded by Mr. Wufsus, and carried unanimously.

**ITEM #2C – REAFFIRMATION OF ELECTRONIC
STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (E-STIP)
FOR THE COUNTY OF LACKAWANNA TRANSIT SYSTEM (COLTS)**

Dean Roberts brought the group's attention to the E-STIP for COLTS that was distributed in advance of the meeting, and may be viewed here:

<http://www.lltsmpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TIP-Revisions-Letter-for-Dean-Roberts.pdf>

COLTS is seeking to update its TIP to better reflect the expenditures it plans to incur in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 under Grant# 1443-2020-1. COLTS seeks to use funds for preventative maintenance of vehicles; bus radio and electrical upgrades; and security features.

Mr. Pitoniak said approval for the E-STIP is required only from the Coordinating Committee. Mr. Fiume made this motion. It was seconded by Mr. Wufsus and carried without opposition.

ITEM #3A – COMMENCEMENT OF SPRING PROJECTS

Mr. Pitoniak requested Mr. Petrini display for all webinar participants a slideshow of trail and roadway improvement projects expected to let between April and June 2020:

<http://www.lltsmpo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/LET-projects-4.15.20.pdf>

Chris Chapman described the projects, and then asked if there were any questions. There were none.

ITEM #3B – FEDERAL CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Mr. Pitoniak noted that LLTS's certification review was held as a two-day event in January. The review provided an opportunity for federal partners to review the work of the MPO to ensure it is compliant with federal law. Eventually, a final report on outcomes is expected to be issued by Tim Lidiak of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Mr. Pitoniak said that a key challenge identified in past reviews was the lack of staffing available from the two Counties to support LLTS. This is no longer expected to be a finding because more staff is available now.

Mr. Roberts wondered aloud whether recent efforts to prepare for a possible infusion of transportation improvement project funds from a COVID-19 stimulus bill would delay issuance of the report by Mr. Lidiak. Jamie Lemon said it was her understanding that Mr. Lidiak is still working on the report, and it is expected to be released within a month's time.

ITEM #3C – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) WORKSHOP

Ms. Lemon said that for LLTS's next TIP submission (for FFY 2021), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will want to know where EJ populations exist (with an illustrative map), and a benefits-and-burdens analysis. If there are any anticipated disproportionate impacts, FHWA will want to see a description of how they would be mitigated; please document that thought process.

She noted that an EJ training had recently been held in Reading. LLTS staff from both Counties attended. Ms. Lemon said that after LLTS releases its EJ report, FHWA and PennDOT Central Office will conduct a review to point out what went well and what could be improved.

ITEM #4A – SCRANTON/ WILKES-BARRE DOWNTOWNS BICYCLE/ PEDESTRIAN NETWORK PLAN

Mr. Pitoniak said that public outreach meetings were held in each of the downtowns in late January and were well-attended. At the meetings, the developing bike/ pedestrian study was presented and discussed.

It will become more difficult to hold further meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Petrini said that a meeting was held with the consultant in February. A final draft of the report is due for circulation in June. Stephanie Milewski, the consultant team project manager, agreed that this is the anticipated timeline.

ITEM #4B – PENNDOT CONNECTS

Mr. Fisher was asked to provide an update on PennDOT Connects (an interactive database useful for sharing/ gathering input from the public and governmental stakeholders on transportation infrastructure improvement projects). He said that outreach to local communities regarding PennDOT Connects is rather stagnant right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PennDOT had been hosting periodic meetings with local governments and had been attending their municipal meetings.

Mr. Fisher suggested that PennDOT staff should have continued discussions with LLTS staff from both Counties on how to move forward.

It was mentioned that a recent meeting between PennDOT and the City of Hazleton went very well, and there may be interest in holding another such meeting again in the future.

Mr. Pitoniak suggested there may also be interest in hosting an LLTS Committees meeting in Hazleton again someday. The October 2019 LLTS Committees meeting had been successfully held there, and the hosts were hospitable.

ITEM #4C – FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Mr. Chapman provided an update regarding the bi-county effort to update the functional classification of roadways within LLTS's jurisdiction. He said Luzerne County staff have expanded their spreadsheet in order to provide the additional data PennDOT had requested be added over the last few months. This has concluded in them having mapped the routes proposed for reclassification. They will soon be sending these maps to PennDOT District 4.0 for their review and comment.

Matthew Jones said that Lackawanna County staff are still working to expand their data spreadsheet. A concurrent effort is underway to pull out ADT data from various files so these can be sent to PennDOT for conversion to AADT. Some of the count data was collected by PennDOT while some of it was collected by Lackawanna County staff. The Lackawanna-collected data are the files that need to be converted to AADT. Mr. Jones is also working to update the PennDOT count data to be utilized; the spreadsheet had contained 2017 data but 2019 data are now available. The effort may take another few months to wrap up. Coordination between staff will need to occur to reconcile the spreadsheets and to generate illustrative maps of the routes proposed for reclassification. This effort could be delayed due to the pandemic.

Mr. Roberts asked: What is the period of review?

Mr. Pitoniak said that LLTS's functional class maps are two census cycles old. We are trying to update the maps as best as we can. We may not get newer census information for another few to several years.

ITEM #4D – SCRANTON TO HOBOKEN RAIL RESUMPTION

Mr. Pitoniak provided an update regarding the years-long effort to re-establish commuter rail services between Scranton, PA and Hoboken, NJ. The effort is somewhat stalled due to limits on coordination caused by the viral pandemic.

ITEM #4E – TIP TIMELINE UPDATE

The TIP update for FFY 2021 has been drafted and was shared/ discussed at the last LLTS meeting in January. The file appears too large to post on the LLTS website but is available by contacting Mr. Roberts or county planning staff.

Mr. Roberts said that once the air quality report is obtained (expected by May) then LLTS will be free to move forward with consideration for adoption.

Mr. Pitoniak said that – in the past – he would post notice of draft TIP updates in public libraries throughout the region, but he cannot do that now. Mr. Roberts suggested that perhaps the file be

uploaded to the LLTS website; this might be a convenient way to share the document with the public in advance of the next LLTS meeting in July when it will likely be discussed again and possibly adopted. However, staff has encountered difficulty trying to post the large file online.

In advance of the January LLTS Committees meeting, Mr. Petrini had sent the document to members via e-mail. One possible solution – when ads are placed in the newspapers announcing the July LLTS meeting – is to mention the document’s availability via e-mail if the public wishes to request it from county staff.

The July meeting may need to be held by webinar rather than in-person if the pandemic continues into the summer. Kristin Mulkerin said a virtual meeting may suffice. Further guidance on acceptable methods for conducting public meetings during the pandemic is expected from PennDOT. Ms. Mulkerin encouraged LLTS staff to do the best they can to engage the public, and to document whatever actions are taken in order to be transparent.

Mr. Pitoniak encouraged PennDOT to share with LLTS staff whatever methods they see other MPOs undertake in the coming days to satisfy this requirement.

Mr. Roberts said a virtual meeting may indeed become necessary in July. He suggested Mr. Petrini again send the draft TIP update to members in advance of the July meeting.

ITEM #4F – DEVELOPMENT OF THE BI-COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND THE LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

Mr. Pitoniak explained that the effort to update the Long Range Transportation Plan in tandem with the Regional (Comprehensive) Plan is continuing. The target date for completion is Feb. 2021.

A stakeholders/ steering committee meeting is scheduled to be held today... at 1:00 PM. The meeting was to be held in-person in Pittston but had to be converted to an online webinar due to the pandemic.

Mr. Chapman said a survey has been developed and will be going live soon. Committee members will be asked to take the survey, and to forward it to their contacts who should be encouraged to take the survey as well.

Mr. Petrini said the survey will be critical for collecting public input- especially if our ability to hold in-person meetings continues to be severely limited throughout the year.

Ms. Mulkerin encouraged the team to consider use of social media too. Mr. Pitoniak said the Lackawanna County Department of Planning and Economic Development recently created a Facebook page, and there are plans to post the survey there.

ITEM #4G – JULY MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the combined Technical and Coordinating Committees will occur on July 15, 2020. Location is to be determined. It may become necessary to hold the meeting virtually if the viral pandemic emergency declaration is not lifted by then. Staff will announce more details in advance of the meeting.

ITEM #5 – OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Frati expressed thanks to Mr. Pedri for the assistance Luzerne County provided the City of Wilkes-Barre in responding to recent storm damage. Mr. Pedri said he appreciated this.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pitoniak entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Petrini made this motion on behalf of the Technical Committee, with Mr. Pocius seconding, and carrying.

On behalf of the Coordinating Committee, Mr. Fiume made a motion to adjourn, with Mr. Wufsus seconding, and carrying.

The meeting adjourned.

LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION
STUDY MEETING - COORDINATING COMMITTEE
April 15, 2020

<u>COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT & NO PROXY</u>	<u>PROXY PRESENT</u>
<u>PENNDOT</u>			
Richard N. Roman, District 4-0 Office	X		
Kristin Mulkerin, Central Office	X		
<u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
Vacant (Board of Commissioners)		X	
Brenda N. Sacco, Acting Director of Planning & Economic Development (Steve Pitoniak, Planning Dept. Manager – Proxy on April 15, 2020)			X
<u>LUZERNE COUNTY</u>			
C. David Pedri, County Manager, Committee Chair (Heath Eddy, Executive Director of Planning & Zoning – Permanent Proxy)	X		
<u>CITY OF HAZLETON</u>			
Jeffrey L. Cusat, Mayor - (Alan Wufsus, Hazleton City Engineering Technician – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>CITY OF SCRANTON</u>			
Paige Cognetti, Mayor – (John Pocius, LaBella Associates – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>CITY OF WILKES-BARRE</u>			
George Brown, Mayor – (Attilio “Butch” Frati, Director of Operations – Permanent Proxy)			X
<u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
Robert Fiume, COLTS Director, Committee Vice-Chair	X		

TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LUZERNE COUNTY

Lee Horton, LCTA Interim Executive Director – (Kathy Bednarek, LCTA Grants Coordinator – Permanent Proxy) X

AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Carl Beardsley, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Director X

*PA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

Larry Malski, President X

*FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Jamie Lemon, Community Planner X

*FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)

Timothy Lidiak, Project Manager X

*FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Lori Pagnanelli, District Office Manager X

*SENATOR BLAKE’S OFFICE (LACKAWANNA)

Larry West, Regional Director X

*Non-Voting Members

LLTS Technical Committee Members Present:

Steve Pitoniak, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission, Committee Chair

Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office, Committee Vice-Chair

Susan Hazelton, PennDOT District 4-0 Assistant District Executive for Design

Gerard Babinski, PennDOT District 4-0 District Bridge Engineer

Barbara Idhaw, Lackawanna County, Engineering Consultant, Greenman-Pederson, Inc.

Heath Eddy, Luzerne County Planning Commission, Executive Director of Planning & Zoning

John Petrini, Luzerne County, Transportation Planner

Chris Chapman, Luzerne County, Transportation Planner

John Pocius, Proxy for Scranton City Mayor, Paige Cognetti, Engineering Consultant, LaBella Associates

Attilio “Butch” Frati, Director of Operations, Proxy for Wilkes-Barre City Mayor, George Brown

Kathy Bednarek, Proxy for Luzerne County Transit Representative, Lee Horton, LCTA

Stephen Mykulyn, Lackawanna County Aviation Representative

Alan Baranski, Proxy for Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance Member, Jeff Box

*Jamie Lemon, Federal Highway Administration, Community Planner

*Non-Voting Members

LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present:

Denise Corcoran, Anthracite Region Center for Independent Living/ Operation Overcome
Owen Worozbyt, Lackawanna Heritage Valley
Aaron Whitney, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce
Nina Waskevich, AAA Northeast Pennsylvania
Stephanie Milewski, North Pocono Trails Association

Non-Members Present:

Matthew Jones, Lackawanna County Planning
Jay Schectman, Lackawanna County Planning
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Julianne Lawson, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Michael Taluto, PennDOT District 4-0
Kate McMahan, NEPA Alliance