

Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO

Transportation Study

Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting

October 5th, 2022
Minutes

At 1:05pm, Dean Roberts opened the meeting.

Mr. Roberts noted that, per the Sunshine Act requirements, the meeting and agenda were advertised in the Scranton Times, Citizens Voice, and Hazleton Standard Speaker and the meeting time and agenda were posted on the LLTS MPO website more than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Chris Chapman then conducted roll call for Coordinating Committee, Technical Committee, TAC Committee and non-members present.

1. Public Comment

Discussion of items not on the agenda. No public comment was offered.

2. Action Items

2a. Approval of the July 6th, 2022 Combined Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the July 6th meeting minutes. Sue Hazleton moved to approve, seconded by Matt Jones. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the July 6th meeting minutes. Butch Frati moved to approve, seconded by Richard Roman. The motion carried.

[July 6th Meeting Minutes](#)

2b. 2021 TIP and 2023 TIP

Steve Fisher noted that the 2023 program started on Oct. 1st. He said that there were two amendments to the TIP.

Amendment #1:

- LLTS Highway Reserve – increase reserve line item for balancing
- SR 6 to SR 6006 – decrease CON phase for balancing
- SR 3013 Main Street Signal Corridor – decrease CON phase for balancing
- SR 309 over Toby Creek – add CON phase to bid project
- SR 347 over Lackawanna River – add PE phase
- SR 115 Replacement – add PE phase

Amendment #2:

- LLTS Highway Reserve – decrease reserve line item for balancing

- SR 6006 over Leggetts Creek Preservation – add CON phase to bid project
- SR 3013 Main St. Signal Corridor Phase 2 – add PE phase to begin design

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the two TIP amendments. Mr. Chapman moved to approve, seconded by Butch Frati. The motion passed.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the two TIP amendments. Brenda Sacco moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Roman. The motion passed.

[Current TIP](#)

[Amendment #1](#)

[Amendment #2](#)

3. Discussion Items

3a. 2023-2026 TIP Air Quality Update

Mr. Roberts stated that, as per the FHWA, two projects on the Interstate TIP, the I-81 Partnership in Luzerne County and the I-81 I4R project in Lackawanna County, were listed in the TIP as exempt projects but should be classified as “significant.” The change will require a new air quality resolution and a second public comment period for the TIP as a whole, which might need to be ratified again at the January MPO meeting.

Mr. Chapman said that MPO staff will send out the TIP packet again, and another vote can be held in January.

3b. D&L Trail Update

Liz Rosencranz gave an update on several gaps in the D&L Trail in Luzerne County. Efforts to close the gaps are in various stages of planning. A feasibility study is ongoing on the Ashley to Giant’s Despair section, with another study needed for the gap from downtown Wilkes-Barre to Ashley. Gaps in the vicinity of Giant’s Despair and Mountain Top are in final engineering, with construction expected to start within a year.

[D&L Trail Update](#)

3c. Mill Street Bridge, Dunmore

Mr. Chapman said that the bridge has been eligible for funding but remained unfunded in the Long-Range Transportation Plan because ownership of the bridge was unclear. Now that Dunmore Borough has been determined as the owner, the borough can submit the bridge repair project to the TYP for eventual funding.

Mr. Roman said that the municipality be made aware of opportunities through the new federal transportation infrastructure programs.

Mr. Jones asked if there was any objection to the ownership determination. Mr. Chapman answered that Dunmore will officially claim the bridge during its next council meeting.

[Mill Street Bridge, Dunmore](#)

3d. National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program

Mr. Chapman gave an overview of the program’s goals in PA, such as infrastructure location across the state and locally, as well as required charging capacity. The program aims to have charging infrastructure installed every 50 miles along the interstate highways, within one travel mile of an exit/intersection. He

added that PA will receive \$171 million over five years from the program, with further information coming after an Oct. 25th meeting with PennDOT and other stakeholders.

[NEVI Program](#)

3e. PennDOT Pathways

Mr. Roberts said PennDOT is progressing environmental review on nine bridges along interstate routes, though with a recent court decision blocking tolls on those bridges, three projects are being re-evaluated.

Mr. Chapman noted that seven of the nine projects are currently moving forward.

3f. Fall Planning Partners Meeting

Mr. Chapman said that this year's Planning Partners Meeting will be held in State College on October 18th-20th. No agenda has been released yet, but he said it will likely focus on the IJJA.

Mr. Roberts said that many transportation issues would be covered, such as the BIL, HSIP, and others.

3g. Wilkes-Barre Rail to Philadelphia

Mr. Frati gave an update on the project. He said that a \$250k grant has been received to study five routes between Wilkes-Barre and Philadelphia to determine which route(s) will be viable, and briefly described the five possibilities. Completion of the study is expected around June 2023.

[Wilkes-Barre Rail to Philadelphia](#)

3h. LHVA Update

Owen Worozbyt described several Heritage Valley Trail projects. A feasibility study is planned to research a connection from the trail in Taylor to the Luzerne County National Recreation Trail in Pittston, closing a 6.5-mile gap. Other major projects include a crossing at Meredith St. and Electric St. in Carbondale Twp., a crossing of SR 247 in Blakely, and an extension of the trail in Dickson City. The three projects are in design and are partially or fully funded.

He also gave an overview of projects in the vicinity of Scranton's Intermodal Center, including a pedestrian bridge across the Lackawanna River and an underpass off of Cliff Street to increase access to a planned park near the Steamtown National Historic Site.

[LHVA Update](#)

3i. Carbon Reduction Program

Mr. Chapman said that he'd attended two webinars on the Carbon Reduction Program, which provides funding to reduce transportation emissions. He said that PA received \$50 million in FY '22, with approximately \$1 million going to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area.

[Carbon Reduction Program](#)

3j. August Redistribution

Mr. Roberts explained that federal money that isn't used is redistributed to other states annually. He said that PA is receiving around \$170 million for existing projects from the redistribution, which is consistent with what the state usually receives.

3k. Multimodal Transportation Fund

Mr. Chapman said that the application window for the MTF is open until mid-November. He added that a broad range of projects are eligible for the program.

4. Progress Reports

4a. PennDOT Connects Update

Mr. Fisher said that the 2023 program has been adopted and that PennDOT is continuing to meet with municipalities throughout the MPO.

Mr. Chapman added that many resources are available to municipalities, should they reach out.

4b. Road Safety Reviews

Mr. Chapman explained that road safety reviews are planned every TIP cycle, and that PennDOT and county representatives visit several sites with a history of automobile collisions to evaluate sight issues, excessive speeds, truck traffic, and other risk factors. Luzerne County had four locations visited in this TIP cycle.

Mary Liz Donato said that Lackawanna County's three site visits had been rescheduled to Oct. 11th due to inclement weather.

Mr. Chapman said that a presentation would be put together for the January MPO meeting and a report would be submitted to apply for HSIP funding, and asked the committee members for suggestions of other high-risk intersections or road segments in either county for future site visits.

Mr. Fisher added that not every visit generates a large project, and that smaller projects often accomplish the needed changes.

4c. LCTA Microtransit Update

Kathy Bednarek said that the LCTA has submitted a project to the Luzerne County ARPA program in September for both software and operational costs. The organization is running a simulation with one potential vendor targeting the industrial park in the Greater Pittston area and the Hanover Industrial Park to evaluate performance data, with a second vendor's simulation pending.

Mr. Fiume said that microtransit will likely be included in the LCTA's upcoming route re-evaluation. He added that the current and upcoming vendor simulations utilize four or five vehicles for the two industrial parks.

Mr. Chapman said that microtransit is meant as a supplement to fixed route service rather than as a replacement.

4d. Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS)

Mr. Chapman said that HPMS inventories are done yearly to keep PennDOT up to date on road facilities and conditions. Lackawanna County had its biannual QA with Pat McVeigh from PennDOT, visiting ten road segments in the Scranton area to verify the information submitted by county staff in 2021 was correct.

4e. Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Study

Mr. Chapman said that the study's beginning had been delayed by legal review by WSP, the consultant firm, but that it would be moving forward with a kick-off meeting on Oct. 6th.

4f. 2023 LLTS MPO Meeting Schedule

The tentative schedule for MPO meetings in 2023 was decided upon. Those upcoming meetings will be available with both an in-person and a virtual component. The location is to be determined.

All meetings are at 1:00 PM unless otherwise noted:

- January 18th, 2023
- April 19th, 2023
- July 19th, 2023
- October 4th, 2023

5. Other Business

Matt Jones informed the committees that the Luzerne County Council has backed a loan for the Redevelopment Authority of \$55 million, to be repaid over 25 years with LSA funds from the local casino. The loan is intended to fund the repair of county-owned roads and bridges, with specific projects as yet undecided.

Mr. Chapman announced Butch Frati's retirement, and that this would be his last meeting. Several committee members thanked Mr. Frati for his years of service.

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Chapman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hazleton. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion to adjourn from the Coordinating Committee.

Mr. Frati moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Roman. The motion carried.

**LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION
STUDY MEETING
MPO TECHNICAL-COORDINATING COMMITTEES**

October 5th, 2022

<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, Committee Vice-Chair	X		
Kristin Mulkerin, Central Office (Dean Roberts PennDOT Central Office-Proxy)			X
<u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u>			
<i>Vacant</i> (Board of Commissioners)		X	
Brenda N. Sacco, Director of Planning & Economic Development	X		
<u>LUZERNE COUNTY</u>			
Randy Robertson County Manager (Matthew Jones, Executive Director of Luzerne County 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 - (Tom Reilly Jr., Reilly 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>			
Tim McGrath, COLTS Director		X	

TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE - LUZERNE COUNTY

Robert Fiume, LCTA Director, Committee Chair X

AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE

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

***PA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY**

Larry Malski, President X

***FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

Matt Smoker, Innovative Finance & Planning Implementation Manager X

***FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)**

Timothy Lidiak, Project Manager X

***FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

Lori Pagnanelli, District Office Manager X

*Non-Voting Member

LLTS Technical Committee Members Present:

Dean Roberts,

PennDOT Central Office, Committee Chair

Susan Hazelton,

PennDOT District 4-0 Assistant District Executive for Design, Committee Vice-Chair

Gerard Babinski,

PennDOT District 4-0 District Bridge Engineer

Brenda Sacco,

Lackawanna County, Director of Planning and Economic Development

Barbara Idhaw, Proxy – Bob Bochicchio

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

Chris Chapman,

Luzerne County, Transportation Planner

Mary Liz Donato,

Lackawanna County Planning Department Manager

Tom Reilly, Jr.,

Proxy for Scranton City Mayor, Paige Cognetti, Engineering Consultant, Reilly Associates

Attilio “Butch” Frati,

Proxy for Wilkes-Barre Mayor, George Brown, Director of Operations

Kathy Bednarek

Luzerne County Transportation Authority, (LCTA) Grants Coordinator

Stephen Mykulyn

Lackawanna County Aviation Representative

Alan Baranski,

Permanent Proxy for Jeffrey Box, NEPA Alliance President/CEO

Matt Jones,

Executive Director, Luzerne County Planning and Zoning

LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present:

Stephanie Milewski, North Pocono Trails Association

Aaron Whitney, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce

Janet Sweeney, PA Environmental Council

Owen Worozbyt, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association

Non-Members Present:

Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0

Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0

Kate McMahon, NEPA Alliance

John Petrini, PennDOT District 4-0

Joe Corcoran, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association

Michael Grantner, STV

Robert Kenney, Lackawanna County Planning Department

Jessica Edwards, Lackawanna County Planning Department

Liz Rosencrans, D&L Trail

Eric Middleton, Lackawanna County Planning Department

Jonathan Shaw, Luzerne County Transportation Planner

April Hannon, PennDOT Bike-Ped Coordinator