

Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO Transportation Study

Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting

January 25th, 2023 Minutes

At 1:16pm, Chris Chapman opened the meeting.

Mr. Chapman 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.

1. Public Comment

Discussion of items not on the agenda. Mr. Chapman noted that one request to comment had been received from the public, but that the person was not in attendance.

2. Action Items

2a. The 2023-2026 Conformity Determination

Due to additional scope of work added to two projects on the TIP, a new Conformity Determination was required. Mr. Chapman requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the determination. A motion was made by Matt Jones, seconded by Sue Hazelton. The motion carried.

Bob Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the Conformity Determination. A motion was made by Rich Roman, seconded by Frank Hampton. The motion carried.

- [2023-2026 Conformity Determination](#)

2b. The 2023-2026 Air Quality Resolution

Due to additional scope of work added to two projects on the TIP, a new Air Quality Resolution was required. Mr. Chapman requested a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mary Liz Donato, seconded by Mr. Jones. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume requested a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the Air Quality Resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mark Barry. The motion carried.

- [2023-2026 Air Quality Resolution](#)

2c. The 2023-2026 TIP

Due to additional scope of work added to two projects on the TIP, re-approval of the TIP was required. Mr. Chapman requested a motion from the Technical Committee to reapprove the TIP. A motion was made by Ms. Donato, seconded by Barbara Idhaw. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume requested a motion from the Coordinating Committee to reapprove the TIP. A motion was made by Mr. Hampton, seconded by Brenda Sacco. The motion carried.

- [2023-2026 TIP](#)

2d. Approval of the Oct. 5th, 2022 Combined Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Chapman asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the Oct. 5th, 2022 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Stephen Mykulyn, seconded by Mr. Jones. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the Oct. 5th, 2022 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Barry. The motion carried.

- [Oct. 5th, 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)

2e. 2023 TIP and Actions

Steve Fisher explained that several administrative actions were taken to adjust in which year funding was placed after the adoption of the TIP and the start of the new federal fiscal year. In addition, he presented one amendment to the TIP to distribute carbon-reduction program funding:

- [MPMS 73300 – LLTS Highway Reserve](#)

Mr. Chapman asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the TIP amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ms. Hazelton. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the TIP amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Ms. Sacco. The motion carried.

- [2023 TIP](#)
- [Actions](#)

2f. TIP Reaffirmation

Mr. Fisher reviewed three TIP amendments, previously voted upon, that required reaffirmation:

- [MPMS 8608 – Hillside-Huntsville Extension](#), advancing project onto TIP from TYP
- [MPMS 115659 – Stauffer Road Construction](#), addition of construction project
- [MPMS 114271 – SR 309 over Susquehanna River](#), advancing prelim. engineering phase

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to reaffirm the projects. A motion was made by Mr. Hampton, seconded by Mr. Barry. The motion carried.

2g. Approval of the Statewide Performance Measures (PM1) – Safety Targets

Mr. Chapman said that the safety performance measures (PM1) are usually adopted annually, and that the MPO uses the state targets in support of the Vision-Zero effort to reduce traffic deaths. He added that other state performance measures (PM2 – Pavement and Bridge; PM3 – Air Quality) would be delayed until the April or July MPO meetings.

Mr. Chapman asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the statewide performance safety targets. A motion was made by Ms. Donato, seconded by Mr. Jones. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the statewide performance safety targets. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Hampton. The motion carried.

- [PM1 – Safety Targets](#)

3. Discussion Items

3a. Spring Project Commencement

Mr. Chapman and Eric Middleton presented an overview of the upcoming Let projects with twenty projects for the quarter:

- MPMS 110327: SR 309 Signal Corridor
- MPMS 115729: SR 309 over Br Wapwallopen Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 115735: SR 4037 over Beach Haven Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 93006: SR 309 over Nescopeck Creek
- MPMS 111473: Pittston North Main Street Streetscape
- MPMS 9174: SR 309 over Branch of Toby Creek
- MPMS 67290: SR 4033 over Branch Pine Creek
- MPMS 67298: SR 4010 over Tributary Huntington Creek
- MPMS 67329: SR 4016 over Reyburn Creek
- MPMS 117976: Federal Aid Paving 4-23-FP1 - SR 309, 1011, 339
- MPMS 96722: SR 1044 over Abraham's Creek
- MPMS 67283: SR 309 over Leonards Creek
- MPMS 102866: SR 3013 Main Street Singal Corridor
- MPMS 115801: SR 347 over Hull Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 115802: SR 347 over Leggetts Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 97930: SR 435 over Interstate 84
- MPMS 100499: SR 4036 over Branch Falls Creek
- MPMS 115982: SR 6006 over SR 107 Preservation
- MPMS 117976: Federal Aid Paving 4-23-FP1 - SR 6011
- MPMS 96719: SR 632 over Ackerly Creek

- [Spring Project Commencement](#)

3b. Scranton Bridge Funding Request

Ms. Donato said that the City of Scranton requested MPO program funding for the design and construction of seven bridge replacements within the next five to ten years. Tom Reilly, the city's engineer, gave a presentation on the state of the bridges and the required repairs.

Mr. Jones said that the MPO has received several similar requests from constituent municipalities, but that project funding is directed by the Long-Range Transportation Plan. He added that the city should submit the project requests for the next plan update, due in 2026.

Mr. Chapman advised Mr. Reilly to continue seeking additional funding opportunities, as the MPO is doing to supplement projects already in the TIP.

Mr. Roman said that, given the scale of the necessary repairs across the region and the limited funding to conduct them, municipalities and the MPO should begin looking at detour routes, safety routes, etc. for some projects in case of bridge closures before repairs can be funded. He added that it should be determined which bridges would have the greatest negative impact on the region if closed, in order to prioritize projects.

Mr. Reilly replied that several of the bridges on Scranton's list would present significant negative impacts to local neighborhoods if closed, as alternative routes were also in need of repair and could face closure as well. He agreed that risk assessment is important moving forward.

Mr. Roman added that even when funding is available bridge replacements take years to complete.

Vince Amico said that the Myrtle St. Bridge mentioned in Mr. Reilly's presentation provides emergency service access to the Bunker Hill section of Dunmore, and that closure of the bridge would cause significant delays in case of emergencies.

Mr. Chapman told Mr. Amico that Dunmore's request for funding to repair the Mill St. Bridge would have a similar path forward as Scranton's request for its bridges. By taking ownership of the bridge, Dunmore had cleared the biggest hurdle for the bridge to be added into future TIP updates.

- [Scranton Bridge Funding Request](#)

3c. Spring Planning Partners

Mr. Chapman said that the Planning Partners meeting is an annual meeting with other MPOs and PennDOT staff in a central location. The meeting will provide guidance on updating the UPWP and the next iteration of the TIP. He said he was not sure if the meeting would be in-person or virtual.

3d. Joint County Plans for 2023

Mr. Chapman explained that Luzerne County staff would be taking the lead, with Lackawanna County staff supporting, in updating several plans written in conjunction with the 2015 iteration of the Long-Range Transportation Plan:

- Public Participation Plan
- Limited-English Proficiency Plan
- Title VI Plan
- Congestion Management Process
- Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

He added that an RFP is being developed, and he expanded on the Congestion Management Process plan. The plan looks at the most congested corridors in the region, develops volume-to-capacity ratios, and solutions to alleviate the issue such as widening roads, coordinated traffic signals, adding turning lanes, etc.

Mr. Jones said that Luzerne County Council was receptive to the updates and had received Lackawanna County's bi-county partnership agreement. He anticipated that the council would authorize the agreement at their next meeting in mid-February.

3e. Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans

Mr. Chapman said that he had distributed the Transit Asset Management plan prior to the meeting. The plan included the prior year's performance and the next year's targets for each of the three public transit agencies in the MPO.

4. Progress Reports

4a. PennDOT Connects/Municipal Outreach

Mr. Fisher reviewed an informal PennDOT Connects meeting between MPO staff, PennDOT District 4-0 staff, and the city of Scranton on Dec. 21st. He said the meeting covered Vision Zero, Safe Streets to School, and active transportation policies in the city, and highlighted the idea of “pedestrian safety reviews,” similar to the road safety reviews performed every three years by the MPO and District 4-0.

He added that District 4-0 will hold a municipal outreach session at the district offices on Mar. 28th. The meeting will be held both in-person and virtually.

4b. Road Safety Reviews

Mr. Chapman and Mr. Middleton presented a slideshow highlighting the nine roadway safety audits that were conducted across both counties over the course of two days in September and October. The slideshow highlighted safety issues at these intersections, the recent accident history PennDOT had compiled on the subject sites, and recommendations the team had arrived at for improving safety at these locations.

Mr. Roman addressed one of the sites, SR 2007 (Giant’s Despair) in Luzerne County, and said that he and his staff had recently met with State Rep. Pashinski, local municipal officials, and the PA State Police regarding possible solutions to continued truck use of the road. Proposed steps include the additional use of signage and contacting GPS companies to reroute trucks along a safer route.

Mr. Hampton asked if a lack of English fluency among drivers could be causing an issue, given the number of warning signs already in place. Mr. Roman responded that the ability to speak and understand English was already a federal requirement for acquiring a CDL license, so adding signs in other languages wouldn’t necessarily help resolve the problem.

- [Road Safety Reviews](#)

4c. Multimodal Transportation Fund

Mr. Chapman said that guidance had been given for the Multimodal Transportation Fund. While confidentiality rules limited what he could share about the applicant projects, he said that the applications had been received and MPO and District 4-0 staff had a deadline of Mar. 31st to provide comments. He added that an announcement on grant awards should be expected by mid to late 2023.

4d. LCTA Microtransit Update

Mr. Fiume said that LCTA’s microtransit pilot program is moving forward. The organization is working with vendors to provide the service, as well as sorting out funding sources. The pilot will still focus on two industrial parks with the ultimate goal of introducing microtransit to the entire service area as part of LCTA’s Transit Development Plan, which is set to launch in the following weeks.

4e. Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Study

Mr. Chapman said that MPO staff had been working with WSP, the firm conducting the study, to provide maps and collect data on land use within the MPO.

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:

- April 19th, 2023
- July 12th, 2023
- October 4th, 2023

5. Other Business

Gene Porochniak from FHWA provided two websites listing key notices of funding opportunities and their opening/closing dates, as well as a checklist for application preparation.

- [Key Notices of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [Discretionary Grant Preparation Checklist for Prospective Applicants](#)

Craig Beavers, Assistant City Planner for Scranton, said that he had received multiple inquiries about a possible Bus Rapid Transit study and asked if there was any movement on conducting the study.

Mr. Chapman said that while a Bus Rapid Transit study is included as a goal in the Long-Range Transportation Plan, such a study was not planned in the near future.

Mr. Fiume added that it wasn't something LCTA was working on currently, but that the upcoming Transit Development Plan would likely look at the feasibility of a rapid transit system in the area. He said it would normally involve an additional lane on a highway and asked Mr. Roman if PennDOT had any rapid transit plans.

Mr. Roman replied that he hadn't heard any plans on PennDOT's part to add a lane specifically for rapid transit, even though plans are in place to expand I-81 in several locations between Hazleton and Scranton. He also said that he doubted there was sufficient transit volume to justify the cost of adding a lane restricted to transit.

Mr. Chapman said that construction of LCTA's new facility is progressing quickly. Mr. Fiume agreed, and added that the organization expects to move into the facility in early 2024.

Mr. Jones asked for any updates on the proposed Scranton-Hoboken rail effort to be shared with the MPO staff. Mr. Chapman said that Amtrak is conducting a feasibility study and that an online petition to reopen the line was circulating. Ms. Donato said that the Rail Authority was seeking grant funding to replace tracks for high-speed trains.

With no other business, Mr. Chapman asked for a motion to adjourn from the Technical Committee. Ms. Hazelton moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Idhaw. The motion carried.

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

Mr. Roman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Barry. 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 (Frank Hampton, 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>			
Brian Swetz, Acting County Manager (Matthew Jones, Executive Director of Luzerne County Planning & Zoning – Permanent Proxy)	X		
<u>CITY OF HAZLETON</u>			
Jeffrey L. Cusat, Mayor - (Joshua Esposito, 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 - (Mark Barry, 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**

Gene Porochniak, Community Planner 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:

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

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

Mark Barry,

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

Kathy Bednarek,

Luzerne County Transportation Authority, (LCTA) Grants Coordinator

Michael Danchek,

County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS)

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

Ralph Sharp,

Proxy for Hazleton Mayor Cusat, Hazleton Public Transit (HPT) Director

LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present:

Stephanie Milewski, North Pocono Trails Association

Bernie McGurl, Lackawanna River Corridor Association

Denise Corcoran, ARCIL

Owen Worozbyt, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association

Patrick Williams, Clark Summit

Vivian Williams, Scranton Area Foundation

Non-Members Present:

Craig Beavers, Assistant City Planner
Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0
Eric Middleton, Lackawanna County Transportation Planning Manager
Gregory Wolff, Dunmore Borough Manager
Jessica Edwards, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Manager
Joe Corcoran, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association
John Petrini, PennDOT District 4-0
Jonathan Shaw, Luzerne County, Transportation Planner
Julianne Lawson, PennDOT District 4-0
Kate McMahon, NEPA Alliance
Kevin O'Boyle, Mericle
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0
Michael Grantner, STV
Mike Taluto, PennDOT District 4-0
Robert Kenney, Lackawanna County Planning
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0
Vince Amico, Dunmore Borough Council
Kelsey Widdock, City of Scranton, Project Manager
Amy Betts, Scranton Area Foundation
Priscilla Cuevas, Luzerne County Planning Commission
Theodore Ritsick, DCED