

Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO

Transportation Study

Technical and Coordinating

Committee Meeting

May 2nd, 2023
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.

1. Public Comment

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

2. Action Items

2a. Approval of the 2023-2026 TIP Public Comment Meeting Minutes and January 25th, 2023 Combined Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the 2023-2026 TIP Public Comment meeting minutes and January 25th, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Sue Hazleton, seconded by Alan Baranski. The motion carried.

Robert Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the 2023-2026 TIP Public Comment meeting minutes and January 25th, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Richard Roman, seconded by Matthew Jones. The motion carried.

[2023-2026 TIP Public Comment Meeting Minutes](#)
[January 25th, 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)

2b. 2023 TIP and Actions

Steve Fisher said that the actions were distributed prior to the meeting, and that any questions could be addressed during or after the meeting on any particular action.

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

2c. TIP Reaffirmation

Mr. Fisher said that an amendment had been added since the January 25th meeting to add recently received congestion mitigation funding to the PE phase to MPMS 116551, a corridor improvement project.

Chris Chapman added that the amendment had been sent out for an e-vote in February and was unanimously approved, and that a reaffirmation from the Coordinating Committee was required for approval.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the reaffirmation of the MPMS 116551 amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mark Barry. The motion carried.
[MPMS 116551 – SR 3013 Main St. Signal Corridor](#)

2d. Approval of the Statewide Performance Measures (PM2) – Bridge/Pavement Conditions and (PM3) – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

Mr. Chapman reminded the committees that the statewide safety targets (PM1) had been approved two meetings prior and informed them that the state saw a decrease in the number of traffic fatalities in 2022 vs. 2021.

He added that PM2 (Bridge/Pavement conditions) and PM3 (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) had been delayed but were ready for adoption and explained each standard briefly: PM2 is a percentage of interstate/NHS/bridge deck area on the NHS in good or poor condition, and PM3 is vehicle-miles traveled considered free of congestion. He stated that the target percentages were achieved in both performance measures.

Mr. Roberts asked the Technical Committee for a motion to accept the statewide PM2 and PM3 targets. A motion was made by Larry Malsi, seconded by Mary Liz Donato. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked the Coordinating Committee for a motion to accept the statewide PM2 and PM3 targets. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Barry. The motion carried.
[Statewide Performance Measures PM2 and PM3](#)

2e. Approval of Ted Ritsick, Dept. of Community and Economic Development, as a non-voting member of the LLTS MPO Coordinating and Technical Committees

Mr. Chapman explained that Ted Ritsick from DCED had been instrumental in the adoption of the 2021 Lackawanna-Luzerne Comprehensive Plan in addition to several other efforts throughout the region, and making him a non-voting member of the two committees was suggested as a way to increase his involvement in transportation projects.

Mr. Roberts asked the Technical Committee for a motion to add Mr. Ritsick as a non-voting member of the committee. A motion was made by Mr. Chapman, seconded by Mr. Jones. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked the Coordinating Committee for a motion to add Mr. Ritsick as a non-voting member of the committee. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Fiume. The motion carried.

3. Discussion Items

3a. Spring Project Commencement

Eric Middleton and Jonathan Shaw presented an overview of the upcoming Let projects with sixteen projects for the quarter:

- MPMS 115659- Stauffer Road Construction/Paving Project Phase 3
- MPMS 67085- T437 College Av Marcomis
- MPMS 116292- SR 171 and SR 1003 Intersection Improvement
- MPMS 97020- SR 3002 over Gardner Creek

- MPMS 8308- SR 3002 over Gardner Creek
- MPMS 115727- I-81 over Nuangola Outlet
- MPMS 57671- SR 1012 over Drakes Creek
- MPMS 96721- SR 1012 over Drakes Creek
- MPMS 8608- Hillside-Huntsville CR 16
- MPMS 105050- Nanticoke Streetscaping
- MPMS 101386- SR 29 over Pikes Creek
- MPMS 117837- I-80/I-81 Concrete Pave Repairs Luzerne County
- MPMS 85008- Blackman St SB Ramp
- MPMS 116562- SR 29 over Pikes Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 115736- SR 6309 over Solomons Creek Bridge Preservation
- MPMS 119580- SR 6309 over Ashley Park

[Spring Project Commencement](#)

3b. AMTRAK Scranton to New York Corridor

Mr. Malski gave an overview of the progress made on the project in the last year starting with AMTRAK's Connections 2021 initiative, an analysis of potential corridors that would be the most successful additions to its network. AMTRAK hasn't launched any new corridors since its inception but has received \$66 billion from the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for the development of new routes.

Mr. Malski explained that the Scranton to New York corridor was identified by Connections 2021 as a promising route, with an estimated 473,000 riders annually projected after three years. The route would offer three trains in each direction per day, with an estimated travel time of just under three hours and eight stops along the route.

He added that the project has support from PennDOT, AMTRAK, New Jersey Transit, and the PA Northeast Regional Railroad Authority, an important factor that could give the project's application for BIL funding an advantage as it is one of only two or three applications with its entire corridor owned by public entities. The Federal Railroad Administration will select projects for funding by mid/late summer.

Mr. Jones asked if the state is willing to match funding if the project is selected. Mr. Malski said that state support had been a concern, but PennDOT's decision to act as lead applicant is a significant step.

Mr. Jones then asked if any updates were available on several miles of track repairs/replacements needed in New Jersey, including a potential bridge replacement. Mr. Malski replied that while PA had managed to save all of the right-of-way in the state after some had been legally abandoned, New Jersey had not done so for 28 miles of abandoned and liquidated rail lines. While the land was eventually bought back, the rail had been removed. He said that seven miles of rail are currently being rebuilt with the remaining 21 miles to follow as BIL funding becomes available, and added that two bridges in need of repair/replacement are also included in the application.

Mr. Jones asked why the corridor no longer ends at Hoboken, NJ, instead continuing to New York City. Mr. Malski explained that the previous project fell under the Federal Transit Authority and was aimed primarily at commuters. The current proposal is an AMTRAK project aimed at the general AMTRAK ridership, of which commuters are only a portion.

Mr. Jones asked if the service would run seven days a week, and why the proposed route contains a “loop” in New Jersey. Mr. Malski said that the lines through the Poconos had originally been built in the 1850s to reach several different population centers, resulting in a northern/southern split before the lines came back together. He added that the proposed three trains per day will be divided, with two taking one side of the loop and the third servicing the other side, and that a section of high-speed (110mph) rail is also proposed for the Lackawanna Cutoff.

Mr. Baranski asked about funding for the track upgrades/repairs in New Jersey. Mr. Malski answered that NJ Transit is providing the 20% match to federal funding for the current seven miles of construction.

Mr. Roberts asked if the service could be open by 2028, and when preliminary engineering should begin. Mr. Malski said that a start date for preliminary engineering would be determined after the project is selected by the Federal Railroad Authority, as that selection would significantly increase the chance of receiving funding. [AMTRAK Scranton to New York Corridor](#)

3c. Spring Planning Partners

Mr. Roberts said that financial and procedural guidance has been released for planning partners to begin their TIP updates for the 2025 program. Guidance was released earlier than in previous TIP cycles after receiving feedback that late guidance in those past cycles left districts and planning partners already behind schedule when just starting their TIP updates.

Mr. Chapman added that a one-year UPWP will be utilized this year to separate the UPWP and TIP update timelines.

3d. Federal Certification Review

Mr. Roberts said that the LLTS MPO is considered a Transportation Management Association (TMA) with a population of over 250,000, so a certification review is required every four years. The MPO’s review is led by the FTA, and the next review is set for 2024.

Mr. Chapman added that the federal certification review serves as the MPO’s grading sheet, offering recommendations for possible improvements as well as recognition for satisfactory performance.

3e. Funding/Grant Opportunities

Mr. Chapman explained several current and upcoming funding opportunities. The Charging & Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) program is for publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fuel infrastructure, requires a 20% match, and is open until May 30th.

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program is open until July 10th at 5pm, and is intended to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the roadway. Mr. Chapman said that an action plan is necessary before applying for an implementation project, and that an action plan is being worked on for Luzerne County, likely a Vision Zero plan. Lackawanna County received a SS4A grant in 2022’s funding round.

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) opens on May 30th. An informational webinar will be held on May 24th at 10am. Draft applications are due by July 17th, with final applications due September 15th. Mr. Chapman said that due to the MPO’s population it is allotted its own funding, so the advisory committee will

rank projects for distribution of funding. He added that additional projects will be added to the state-wide list of projects for consideration.

[Charging & Fueling Infrastructure \(CFI\)](#)

[Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\)](#)

[Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside \(TASA\)](#)

3f. RAISE Grant

Ms. Hazleton said that an application for the RAISE grant program was submitted in February for the two bridges in Pittston, Fort Jenkins (state-owned) and Water Street (county-owned). The projects have been on the TIP for some time, and a previous RAISE grant application was unsuccessful. She added that a decision is expected in September.

Ms. Donato said that Lackawanna County submitted a RAISE grant application for \$4.2 million for engineering and environmental reviews for seven county-owned off-system bridges in need of repair or replacement. The county will be matching over \$1 million. She added that several of the bridges are currently closed, forcing detours of several miles.

3g. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Awards

Ms. Donato said that Lackawanna County has received a \$200,000 SS4A grant with a 20% match provided by the county. The county is aiming for a Vision Zero plan and is currently working on an inter-governmental agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. The agreement is estimated to be approved within two months, at which point the county will begin looking for a consultant to complete the plan.

3h. 2020 Census Urbanized Boundary Smoothing

Mr. Chapman said that following the 2020 Census, the updated boundary of the urbanized area needs to be “smoothed”, or generalized in accordance with population and nearby arterial roadways. The population of the region declined so the urbanized area will be smaller than in 2010. The finalized smoothing is due to PennDOT Central Office by June 30th.

[2020 Census Urbanized Boundary Smoothing](#)

4. Progress Reports

4a. PennDOT Connects/Municipal Outreach

Mr. Fisher said that a municipal outreach session had been conducted on March 28th at the district offices and virtually. Approximately 40 people attended in person, with another 20-25 online. Items discussed included the Infrastructure Investment Job Act (IIJA) and its accompanying funding opportunities, PennDOT’s Twelve-Year Program, the NEVI Program. Ted Ritsick addressed several DCED programs available to the municipalities, and Christine Detorre spoke regarding DCNR funding opportunities.

4b. Joint County Plans for 2023

Mr. Chapman explained that five joint county plans are due for an update:

- Public Participation Plan
- Limited-English Proficiency Plan

- Title VI Plan
- Congestion Management Process
- Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

He said that Luzerne County staff is taking the lead on the plans, with the cost split between the two counties. Michael Baker has been chosen as the consultant to complete the plans. Completion of the plans is expected in one year, with the Limited-English Proficiency Plan becoming part of the Title VI Plan.

Mr. Jones added that the goal is to have draft plans ready for April 2024 so that MPO input can be utilized to adjust the final plans by summer 2024.

4c. Multimodal Transportation Fund

Mr. Chapman explained that 15 multi-modal projects had been reviewed by the counties' staff and submitted to the state. A decision on the projects' approval is expected by the fall.

4d. LCTA Microtransit Update

Kathy Bednarek gave a brief refresher on LCTA's microtransit trial run, utilizing app-based on-demand shuttle vehicles to supplement fixed route bus services in Luzerne County's industrial parks. The agency is currently partnering with PennDOT on a Transit Development Plan and is looking for funding opportunities to expand the microtransit service to cover the entirety of the LCTA network.

Mr. Fiume added that stakeholder meetings and analysis of the current network have begun, with the plan continuing throughout the rest of 2023. He said that the goal is for the new service implementation to be ready by the first quarter of 2024, including microtransit.

Mr. Chapman said that LCTA had requested Carbon Reduction funding and that a meeting would be held with PennDOT to discuss available opportunities.

4e. Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Study

Mr. Chapman said that there were no major updates to the freight study and that the consultant was still working on mapping and data collection. The next step is to include engagement with freight stakeholders in the ten-county area.

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:

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

Mr. Chapman said that the October 4th meeting might conflict with the fall Planning Partners meeting and will be moved if needed.

5. Other Business

Gene Porochniak from FHWA provided websites detailing funding opportunities for the CFI and SS4A grants, as well as a wildlife crossing program.

[Wildlife Crossings Program](#)

With no other business, 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. Roman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Fiume. 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>			
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:

Dean Roberts

PennDOT Central Office, Committee Chair

Susan Hazelton,

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

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)

Carl Beardsley,

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Director

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

Larry Malsi,

PA Northeast Regional Railroad Authority, President

Gene Porochniak,

FHWA, Community Planner

LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present:

Bernie McGurl, Lackawanna River Corridor Association

Denise Corcoran, ARCIL

Non-Members Present:

Adam Yozwiak, Luzerne County Planning Commission
Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0
Eric Middleton, Lackawanna County Transportation Planning Manager
Greg Czyzyk, COLTS
Jessica Edwards, Lackawanna County Regional Planning Manager
Jessica Ruddy, PennDOT District 4-0
Joe Corcoran, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association
John Petrini, PennDOT District 4-0
Jonathan Shaw, Luzerne County, Transportation Planner
Kate McMahon, NEPA Alliance
Kyle Streich, PennDOT District 4-0
Larry Plesh, Luzerne County Engineer
Liz Fabri, PennDOT District 4-0
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0
Priscilla Cuevas, Luzerne County Planning Commission
Robert Kenney, Lackawanna County Planning
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0