

# Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO

## Transportation Study

### Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Minutes

At 1:03pm, 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 May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Combined Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Matt Jones, seconded by Chris Chapman. The motion carried.

Robert Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Richard Roman, seconded by Tim McGrath. The motion carried.

[May 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. He added that there were two amendments to be considered:

- [MPMS 112288 – SR 2107 over I-81 NB & SB](#)
- [MPMS 106314 – Elm Street Bridge over Lackawanna River](#)

Ms. Hazleton asked if both projects were being advanced from the TYP to the first four years of the TIP. Mr. Fisher confirmed they were.

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the TIP amendments. A motion was made by Barbara Idhaw, seconded by Sue Hazleton. The motion carried.

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

Mr. Roberts then presented a third amendment to add a new project to the TIP utilizing federal funds:

- [MPMS 119890 – Bus Rapid Transit Planning Study](#)

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the Transit TIP amendment. A motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ralph Sharp. The motion carried.

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

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

## **2c. 2020 Census Urbanized Boundary Smoothing**

Mr. Chapman explained that the urbanized areas within the MPO needed to be updated following the 2020 Census. Once the data became available, staff from both counties collaborated to “smooth” the urban boundary, achieving consistency in road classifications and capturing current and upcoming development.

Mr. Roberts asked what had changed since the 2010 Census update. Mr. Chapman said that the urbanized areas had shrunk, which created several isolated urban “islands.” He said that the smoothing process captured several housing developments that were just outside those urban islands and hadn’t been included in the unsmoothed 2020 Census urban area.

Ms. Hazleton asked if any MOUs were in effect between the LLTS and NEPA MPOs. Mr. Chapman responded that the previous MOUs had been drafted following the last smoothing process after the 2010 Census, and that once the 2020 smoothing had been approved by PennDOT Central Office and FHWA the MOUs would be updated.

Mr. Roberts asked for a motion from the Technical Committee to approve the updated urbanized boundary smoothing. A motion was made by Ms. Hazleton, seconded by Alan Baranski. The motion carried.

Mr. Fiume asked for a motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the updated urbanized boundary smoothing. A motion was made by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Reilly. The motion carried.

[2020 Census Urbanized Boundary Smoothing](#)

## **3. Discussion Items**

### **3a. Summer Project Commencement**

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

- MPMS 93104 SR 2007 over Branch Spring Run Creek
- MPMS 115918 SR 6006 over Leggetts Creek Preservation
- MPMS 84368 SR 6011 Green Ridge St. over Lackawanna River
- MPMS 80797 Parker Street Bridge over Lackawanna River
- MPMS 8174 SR 690 over Van Brunt Creek
- MPMS 114917 Interstate 84 Cable Median Barrier

[Summer Project Commencement](#)

### **3b. Fall Planning Partners**

Mr. Roberts said that dates for the Fall Planning Partners meeting had not been finalized, but that the first week of October was the most likely. He added that more information would be forthcoming when available.

Mr. Jones asked if the meeting would be in-person or hybrid. Mr. Roberts answered that it will only be in-person due to technological hurdles, and that a different location than the previous year's meeting might be chosen to allow a larger audience.

### **3c. Federal Certification Review**

Gene Porochniak said that the certification window is upcoming quickly and that the current certification expires in November 2024. He explained that a site visit between stakeholders will be held to discuss the planning process in the region and to move forward with the recertification process.

He added that FTA will be taking the lead in the certification review and that dates were being considered for the site visit, but that 2024 being a TIP adoption year would complicate scheduling. Initial plans are to hold the meeting in May/June, with March/April or June/July as alternatives to work around the TIP adoption.

Mr. Jones said that early summer (June/July 2024) would be preferable for a site visit as a less-busy period.

Mr. Roberts asked Mr. Chapman when the TIP adoption meeting would be held. Mr. Chapman said that the TIP update would likely be finalized at the July 2024 MPO meeting. Mr. Porochniak added that early July would be the latest the site visit could be held in order to meet the November deadline.

Mr. Jones noted that a July meeting for the certification review could give MPO staff the most time to prepare for the process, given the upcoming public outreach plan updates due for completion in April 2024. Mr. Roberts asked if a meeting could be held shortly after July 4<sup>th</sup>, to which Mr. Porochniak replied that it might limit input from some stakeholders.

### **3d. Funding/Grant Opportunities**

Mr. Chapman said that the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) draft application window has been extended to July 21<sup>st</sup>, while final applications are due by Sep. 15<sup>th</sup>. He explained that the MPO receives a dedicated amount of funding to allocate to projects, and that any projects not selected for full funding by the MPO will be entered into consideration for the state-wide funding round in early 2024. He said that he expects to receive two years' worth of funding to expend. Recommendations for project selection will be made by the Transportation Advisory Committee to the Technical and Coordinating Committees.

Mr. Chapman explained that the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant is a combination of two previous programs that provides funding to projects in disadvantaged communities. The grant consists of several funding pots for different priorities, such as capital construction (reconnecting communities or removing dividing facilities), community planning (restoring connectivity or involving community engagement), and regional planning (equitable assessment addressing mobility challenges by two or more regional agencies). Applications are due Sep. 28<sup>th</sup>.

[Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside \(TASA\)](#)  
[Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods \(RCN\)](#)

### **3e. Pittston Pair RAISE Grant**

Mr. Chapman said that the MPO had received a \$19 million RAISE grant for the repair and replacement of the Fort Jenkins and Water Street bridges in Pittston and West Pittston. Infrastructure improvements such as bicycle/pedestrian facilities will be included, as well as ADA/pedestrian accommodations and traffic signal retiming to several adjacent intersections.

Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Roman and District 4-0 for their efforts in receiving the grant. He asked if an equivalent amount of state funding that had previously been allocated for the bridges would be freed up to use on other projects within the MPO. Mr. Roman said that the cost of the bridges would exceed the grant amount and that the project timeline was too long to say with certainty if any funds could be reallocated.

Mr. Roberts said that the grant would help on a state-wide level, as dedicated funding for a specific project allows greater flexibility for PennDOT Central Office in allocating regular funding elsewhere.

[Pittston Pair RAISE Grant](#)

### **3f. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Awards**

Mr. Chapman that Luzerne County had submitted a SS4A grant application with a goal of writing a Vision Zero plan. He expects grant recipients will be announced later in the year.

Mary Liz Donato said that Lackawanna County's executed SS4A grant agreement would be reviewed by the Lackawanna County commissioners in the next week. Once the agreement is signed by both the county and the US DOT, the county will put out an RFP. She thanked Eric Middleton for his efforts in putting together the grant application.

Mr. Jones said that utilizing SS4A funding in conjunction with the road safety reviews completed in previous years would be an excellent opportunity to improve safety throughout the two-county region.

### **3g. Mill Street Bridge in Dunmore**

Ms. Donato said that Dunmore had accepted ownership of the bridge and that the project had been placed on the Long-Range Transportation Plan as unfunded. She added that the borough had reached out to Lackawanna County for guidance on finding funding sources.

Mr. Chapman said that the bridge has been a priority for years, having been on the 2015 LRTP as well, but the lack of an acknowledged owner had hindered efforts to move the project forward.

Mr. Roman said he had met with the borough and the county to discuss getting the project onto the 2025 TIP, as well as different funding options and project timelines.

## **4. Progress Reports**

### **4a. PennDOT Connects**

Mr. Fisher said that PennDOT would try to increase outreach in advance of the upcoming 2025 TIP update cycle. He added that a site visit had been conducted on May 30<sup>th</sup> at Bear Creek Village's request to address a

safety issue with SR 115, attended by District 4-0, Luzerne County, and village staff. The issue is that vehicles are using a central turning lane to pass vehicles turning right, causing several accidents.

Mr. Chapman said that SR 115 in Bear Creek Village had been reviewed in previous road safety audits and that nine intersections are being looked at for future projects.

#### **4b. Joint County Plans for 2023**

Mr. Chapman said that the first meeting in the update cycle for the five joint county plans had been held two weeks prior, and that three separate steering committees were being put together. Michael Baker has been retained as the consultant to update the plans.

#### **4c. Multimodal Transportation Fund**

Mr. Chapman said that an announcement of grant recipients is expected in the near-future and that he would inform committee members via e-mail at that time.

#### **4d. LCTA Microtransit Update**

Kathy Bednarek said that LCTA is continuing with its microtransit pilot program around the two industrial parks, as well as applying to FHWA for funding through the Carbon Reduction program.

#### **4e. Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Study**

Mr. Chapman said that the draft profile and appendices had been distributed to the ten counties for feedback. He added that he anticipates having a draft to present to the MPO by early 2024 at the latest.

#### **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:**

- October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Mr. Roberts said that the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting will likely conflict with the fall Planning Partners meeting and will need to be moved.

Mr. Chapman said that the MPO should consider changing the quarterly meetings to another day of the week for 2024, and that he would update the committee members when the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting had been rescheduled.

#### **5. Other Business**

No other business was offered.

With no other business, Mr. Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn from the Technical Committee. Mr. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Donato. 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. Reilly. The motion carried.

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

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

<b><u>COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u></b>	<b><u>MEMBER PRESENT</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT &amp; NO PROXY</u></b>	<b><u>PROXY PRESENT</u></b>
<b><u>PENNDOT</u></b>			
Richard N. Roman, District 4-0 Office, Committee Vice-Chair	X		
Kristin Mulkerin, Central Office (Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office-Proxy)			X
<b><u>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u></b>			
<i>Vacant</i> (Board of Commissioners)		X	
Brenda N. Sacco, Director of Planning & Economic Development	X		
<b><u>LUZERNE COUNTY</u></b>			
Romilda Crocamo County Manager (Matthew Jones, Executive Director of Luzerne County Planning & Zoning – Permanent Proxy)	X		
<b><u>CITY OF HAZLETON</u></b>			
Jeffrey L. Cusat, Mayor - (Joshua Esposito, Hazleton City Engineering Technician - Permanent Proxy)		X	
<b><u>CITY OF SCRANTON</u></b>			
Paige Cognetti, Mayor - (Tom Reilly Jr., Reilly Associates-Permanent Proxy)			X
<b><u>CITY OF WILKES-BARRE</u></b>			
George Brown, Mayor - (Mark Barry, Director of Operations - Permanent Proxy)		X	
<b><u>TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE - LACKAWANNA COUNTY</u></b>			
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

**\*PA DEPT. OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

Theodore Ritsick Jr., Local Government Policy Specialist 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

**Gerald Babinski,**

PennDOT District 4-0 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

**Kathy Bednarek,**

Luzerne County Transportation Authority, (LCTA) Grants Coordinator

**Michael Danchek,**

County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS)

**Stephen Mykulyn,**

Lackawanna County Aviation Representative

**Carl Beardsley,**

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Director

**Alan Baranski,**

Permanent Proxy for Jeffrey Box, NEPA Alliance President/CEO

**Matthew Jones,**

Executive Director, Luzerne County Planning and Zoning

**Ralph Sharp,**

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

**Gene Porochniak,**

FHWA, Community Planner

**Theodore Ritsick Jr.,**

DCED Local Government Policy Specialist

**LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present:**

Aaron Whitney, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce

Denise Corcoran, ARCIL

Janet Sweeney, PA Environmental Council

**Non-Members Present:**

April Hannon, PennDOT District 4-0

Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0

Eric Middleton, Lackawanna County Transportation Planning 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

Julie Lawson, PennDOT District 4-0

Kate McMahon, NEPA Alliance

Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0

Robert Kenney, Lackawanna County Planning

Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0

Jimmy Federanko, Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport

Ashley Schoch, PennDOT Central Office