

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
July 27, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting

The one hundred forty second meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Rich Fitzgerald.

Members: Darin Alviano, Tony Amadio, Mike Belding, Kevin Boozel, Morgan Boyd, Tom Ceraso, Douglas Chew, Rich Fitzgerald, Jim Gagliano, Kim Geyer, Sheila Gombita, Mark Gordon, Joe Grata, Kelly Gray, Dick Hadley, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Diana Ireya Vaughan, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Clifford Levine, Larry Maggi, Jeff Marshall, Kevin McCullough, Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Mavis Rainey, Bob Regola, Aurora Sharrard, Nick Sherman, Larry Shifflet, Loretta Spielvogel, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Vince Vicites, Jessica Walls-Lavelle, Christopher Wheat, and Blair Zimmerman.

Others: Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development

Staff: Vincent Valdes, Jim Hassinger, Kirk Brethauer, Linda Duffy, Chuck Imbrogno, Tom Klevan, Jenn Lasser, Vince Massaro, Steve Meredith, Shannon O'Connell, Kay Tomko, Dave Totten, and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Fitzgerald called to order the July 27, 2020 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

- a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded
- b. Any Conflict of Interest Declarations on Action Items – None

2. Action on Minutes of the June 29, 2020 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2020 meeting by Commissioner Maggi which was seconded by Commissioner Junko. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None

4. Financial Report – Vince Massaro

Vince Massaro reported on the financials for the 11-month period of July 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020. Total project related revenues actual and encumbered to date are \$11,940,108 compared to the adopted annual budget of \$13,603,991. This reflects 87.77% of the budget recognized.

On the expenditure side we have \$11,940,108 actual and encumbered to date compared to the adopted annual budget of \$13,603,991. This reflects 87.77% of the budget recognized.

SPC's contract obligations are in place as are all purchase orders through June 30. Monthly and quarterly grant reporting continues. Billing and payments are received timely. The audit begins in September. There were no questions. The financial report was accepted as presented.

5. U.S. DOT Grant Opportunities – Andy Waple

- a. Action on Resolution 10-20 to Support and Endorse the Region's Application to the U. S. Department of Transportation's Complete Trip-ITS4US Deployment Grant Program

Andy explained that there are 3 phases to this program.

Phase 1 – Concept Development

Phase 2 – Design/Build/Test

Phase 3 – Operations Maintenance

This grant focuses on individuals with disabilities. The grant application is due this Monday, August 3.

The Mon Valley

***Rich in History, Poised for the Future***

### **Opportunity Overview**

- SPC is seeking an ITS4US Grant from the USDOT to improve the quality of life within the region
- The Grant program offers the opportunity to solve mobility challenges for 6 different traveler types
  1. People with disabilities
  2. Older Adults
  3. Low income
  4. Rural residents
  5. Veterans
  6. Limited English Proficiency
- Anticipated Award October, 2020

### **Opportunity Overview**

- The ITS4US Grant Program has 5 Goals
  1. High-impact, replicable, and integrated complete trip solutions
  2. Identify needs and challenges of underserved population mobility challenges regardless of location, income, or disability
  3. Develop and deploy mobility solutions
  4. Measure the impact of implemented solutions
  5. Identify replicable solutions and disseminate lessons learned

### **Funding**

- Nationwide Program is funded at \$40 million
- USDOT has stated that it will make multiple awards
  - SPC anticipates an award of +/- \$8 million

Andy explained the breakdown of the award for the different phases.

Phase 1: Concept Development

- Fully paid for with grant funds – no local match
- USDOT Anticipates a cost of \$1 - \$1.8 million

Phase 2 and Phase 3

- \$7 – \$8 million
- \$1.4 - \$1.6 million local match needed

Phase 2: Design/Build/Test

- 20% minimum match required

Phase 3: Operate and Maintain

- 20% minimum match required

## **The Mon Valley**

- A collection of cities, boroughs and towns in
  - Allegheny County
  - Eastern Washington County
  - Western Westmoreland County
  - Fayette County
  - Greene County
- Between City of Pittsburgh and Point Marion

## **Why Focus on the Mon Valley?**

- Population of the Mon Valley peaked in the 1940s-1960s when this region produced the steel that drove the American Industrial Revolution
  - Nearly 160,000 at its peak
    - 49% population reduction from 1950 to 1990
    - 1% reduction per year since 1990
- Severe de-industrialization through the 1980s with the collapse of the steel and mining industries
- Today 23 percent live below the Pennsylvania Poverty Line
  - They make less than \$15,670 annually
- 7.5 percent of the regions residents are veterans
- 19.5 percent are 65+
- 14 percent are disabled

## **Improving Mobility Improves Quality of Life**

- Employment
  - Closing the equity gap
  - Getting people to jobs
  - Getting people to better jobs
- Health
  - Reducing the rate of chronic disease
  - Promoting active lifestyles
  - Fighting the opioid crisis
- Education
  - Reducing absenteeism
  - Reversing the trend of child poverty in the long-term
- Pride
  - Belief that we can!
  - Feeling that there is hope
  - Ability to do something about it

## **Potential Project Partners (this is not a complete list)**

- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Port Authority of Allegheny County
- Heritage Community Transportation
- Mid-Mon Valley Transit Authority
- Pittsburghers for Public Transit
- Westmoreland County Transit
- Washington Transportation Authority
- Carnegie Mellon University – Mobility 21
- Fayette County Transit
- Greene County Transportation

- Shared Use Mobility Center (SUMC)
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
- Uber/Other TNCs
- RubyRide
- Healthy Ride Pittsburgh
- Mon-Valley Alliance
- Mon-Valley Initiative
- Regional Chambers of Commerce

### **Scaling to the Entire SPC Region**

- Transit system coordination is scalable
  - Once implemented, this will improve coordination by as many as 9 local transit operators in the Mon Valley Region
    - The idea of better coordination among independently operating systems can be scaled to all areas of the region
- Software implementation is scalable
  - With base software development complete, expanding use to other parts of the region will be much more within reach
- Stakeholder collaborations
  - The collaboration and coordination that will be achieved through this project can serve as a blueprint to improve deployments of advanced technology solutions
- System integration blueprint
  - This project will interact with the newest and most reliable technology available, saving money on integration costs for future projects

### *Questions:*

Mavis Rainey emphasized that we need to make sure there is an inclusion of a number of ADA groups among these folks. Vincent said that the ADA groups have his full commitment on both the local and national level.

Johnna Pro said this is an exciting opportunity with emphasis on quality of life and the level of technology involved. Vincent Valdes said that the ability to take advantage of technology identifies the capability to get from Point A to Point B.

Commissioner Blair Zimmerman from Greene County asked how it is going to advance in his county. Andy Waple said that it's getting folks to work, doctor appointments, schools, etc. more efficiently and cheaper. It will connect constituents to services they need. Commissioner Zimmerman said he doesn't see a great benefit. There are no roads leading to Greene County from the Mon Valley.

Commissioner Vince Vicites said he has been focused on this for a number of years. Getting Veterans to VA hospitals in Pittsburgh, better transit systems, this grant will help speed this up. It will benefit a lot of people in Fayette County to travel out of the region.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 10-20 by Johnna Pro which was seconded by Lynn Heckman. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

- b. Action on Resolution 11-20 to endorse SPC Staff, in Partnership with PennDOT District 11-0, in Applying to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Initiative (ATCMTD) Grant Program

## **Program Details**

- Develop deployment sites with advanced transportation technologies to improve safety, efficiency, system performance
- \$60 million available with awards up to \$12 million
- Funds obligated within 4 years of award
- Applications due August 31, 2020

## **What can ATM do?**

- Advance queue warning
- Speed harmonization
- Dynamic junction control
- Dynamic lane closure
- Dynamic speed limits
- Advise and redirect traffic on ramps
- Advise and redirect traffic before entrance ramps such as when a tunnel is closed and a detour is needed

Andy mentioned that in looking over the TIP, this project is the best fit for the ATCMTD program. With this project, there is potential for integration of public transportation on the East Busway to downtown. This project will not only improve operations and reduce congestion; it will increase safety on the Parkway East. Variable message signs can control speed, close lanes and redirect traffic before exit ramps where there is congestion or an incident.

Cheryl Moon Sirianni said the addition of message boards to ramps at Bates Street and the Squirrel Hill tunnels give advance notice warning for safety.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 11-20 by Commissioner Tony Amadio which was seconded by Aurora Sharrard. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

## **6. Action on Resolution 12-20 to Approve and Endorse the Region's Area Development Project Priority Listing and Authorize Submission of an Application for Funds – Jenn Lasser**

Jenn Lasser reported that the Committee consisting of Planning Directors and/or their staff met on July 22 to review the projects. She explained that this is a competitive process for limited funding wherein county projects are prioritized and submitted to the State; projects from across Pennsylvania compete for prioritization and are submitted to ARC for funding; and projects from all thirteen states in the Appalachian region compete for ARC funds. There was a lot of meaningful conversation regarding the projects and she thanked Johnna Pro for her active participation in the meeting.

## **ARC Project Evaluation**

- ARC grant programs are competitive
- Projects are evaluated and ranked by the Area Development Committee
- Recommendation to the Commission
- ARC is not obligated to adhere to ranking, but it is “strongly considered”
- Committee ranks ARC projects in two categories:
  - Sec. 201 Local Access Road projects
  - Sec. 214 Construction and Sec. 302 Non-Construction projects

## **Section 201 Local Access Road Project**

- Derry Business Park Access Road (Westmoreland County): to develop the former Westinghouse Porcelain Park brownfield site into a business park in Derry Borough. The project consists of all site work, infrastructure and construction necessary to build an access road (\$500,000).

**Section 214 Construction Projects**

1. The Farm Multipurpose Education Center (Washington County): create an education center and small-scale food processing facility to support agricultural education and business development in Washington and the surrounding counties enabling the Greater Washington County Food Bank to expand its education and workforce development programs for veterans, students, and farmers in the region (\$327,581).
2. Joseph A. Hardy Connellsville Airport Hangar Development Phase 2 (Fayette County): complete construction of one hangar – containing six units – at the airport that will: 1) allow for a greater revenue potential for leased aircraft storage; 2) enhance appearance of airport; and 3) create a more fully functional hangar that has the potential to attract new clients (\$310,114).

**Section 302 Non-Construction Project**

- B-HIVE – Beaver Valley Hub for Innovation, Venture and Entrepreneurship (Beaver County): to create a next generation resource for business start-ups enabling them growth via a physical space, and alignment of regional resources (\$100,000).

7. Other Business/Announcements – Vincent Valdes

Vincent mentioned that at the next meeting there would be a presentation on Hyperloop. There is no meeting in August.

Next Meeting Date – September 28, 2020

8. New Business – None.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Osche  
Secretary-Treasurer