



**Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Transportation Operations and Safety Committee
Traveler Information Workshop**
Tuesday, September 23, 2008
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Regional Enterprise Tower, 23rd Floor, Fetterholf Room

Attendance

Name:	Representing:
Doug Smith	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Robb Dean	PennDOT 12-0
Marc Roncone	MMVTA
Tom Klevon	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Frank Cippel	PennDOT 11-0
Dom D'Andrea	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Kevin Ferry	SAI
Carol Uminski	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Chuck Imbrogno	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Chuck DiPietro	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Linda Fiedler	University of Pittsburgh
Lori Brkovich	Washington County Transit Authority
Mary Jo Morandini	Beaver County Transit Authority
Dave Tomaswick	PennDOT 10-0
Brenda Murphy	BHSTE- PennDOT
Keith Johnson	URS
Shannon O'Connell	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Rich Feder	WR & A
Audrey Snyder	Port Authority of Allegheny County
Scott Thompson-Graves	WR & A
Chuck Rompala	Port Authority of Allegheny County
Katie Baurnes	Oakland Transportation Management Association
Eric Kaunert	Cranberry Township
Bob Pento	PennDOT (via teleconference)
Peter Behrman	Port Authority of Allegheny County
Max Heckman	Michael Baker, Jr.
Lori Duguid	Michael Baker, Jr.
Glenda Murphy	Olszak Management Consulting, Inc.
Jackie Freeman	Olszak Management Consulting, Inc.

Meeting Purpose: To introduce the Regional Traveler Information Needs Analysis and to develop potential survey questions and outreach strategies.

Welcome and Overview of the Project

Doug Smith opened the meeting at 10:00 AM. He said that the Regional Operations Plan was adopted about a year and a half ago and includes traveler information as an item to address. PennDOT is in the process of setting up a 511 system, so this is a good opportunity to move forward with a traveler information needs study.



Doug said that the study will survey the public to find out what kind of traveler information they want, how they currently obtain this information, and how they would like to obtain it in the future. The primary purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the survey.

Background on 511 Programs

Doug said that the study will take a broad look at traveler information, of which the 511 system is only one component. Other components include highway message signs, highway radio, transit, etc.

Max Heckman said that the 511 system was established by the FCC in 1999 and is a nationwide telephone number dedicated to traveler information. It is already in operation in a number of places and is expected to be launched in Pennsylvania in 2009. He shared with the group information on 511's deployment status, statistics, and representative types of call services and data available by area.

Update on PennDOT 511 Efforts

Bob Pento reported that PennDOT issued a Request for Proposal for the 511 project and has tentatively selected the firm of Telvent-Faradyne. By mid-October, the firm should be under contract with notice to proceed and the target is to have the 511 service operational by June 1, 2009.

Some features and operations that may be included are:

- Telephone service (landline and cellular)
- Voice-automation with a touch-tone backbone
- Complementary website
- Access to PennDOT highway cameras
- Option to subscribe to email and/or text message alert service
- Real time traffic condition information
 - Includes speeds and times to address the needs of daily commuters
 - Fused into 511 service
 - Also available at traffic management centers for operators
 - Made possible through a 3-year contract with a private data service

It was asked if this will be a comprehensive statewide interface or if it will be city by city. Bob Pento said that at a minimum, it will include all the traveler information that is already available on PennDOT's website. It is not in the scope of work to develop a regional transit database of vendors who are not already posting their information on the web. There will definitely be statewide information and there will hopefully be a way to link into regional information.

It was asked if there could be a database developed for systems that already have traveler information ready to go in the correct format. Bob Pento said that is a possibility, and we'll need to see what Telvent-Faradyne can do within the scope of the project. It will have to be determined what information will be included on the 511 phone service.

It was asked if the 511 system will provide scheduling information or function as a trip planner. Bob Pento said that it is not in the scope of work to provide a regional trip planner. It was asked



if other states provide this service. Bob Pento said that not many states do, but some have provided trip planners as pilot projects.

Discussion

Glenda Murphy said that the purpose of the discussion is to determine regional priorities and to get feedback on the content of the proposed public survey as well as how to publicize it.

Who do we need to reach? – Identify transportation user groups

- Residents
- Visitors
- Commuters
- Tourists
- Freight traffic
- Younger (more inexperienced) travelers
- Special needs
- Local commercial delivery
- Business travelers
- Recreational travelers (attending special events)
- Every day users
- Sporadic users
- Transit users
 - Bus
 - Rail
 - Paratransit

What types of information do they need? – Identify information needs

- Highway
 - Detours
 - Traffic incidents
 - Construction
 - Service amenities
 - Travel times (congestion)
 - Road conditions
 - Help
 - Parkway patrols
 - Towing
 - Numbers to call
 - Approved service stations
 - Emergency (hospitals)
 - Goods/services
 - Parking
 - Special events information
 - Directions
 - Inter-city
 - Airports
 - Train stations
 - Connections information

- Transit
 - Routes
 - Schedules
 - “Next bus”
 - Real time info
 - Trip itinerary (all-inclusive)
 - Travel times, connections
 - Congestion
 - Delays due to weather
 - Construction
 - Fares
 - Transfer locations
 - Park and Rides (and availability)
 - Service amenities
 - Special events service adjustments
 - Inter-city (multi-modal connections)
 - Contact information for transit providers
 - Visitor/infrequent user information
 - How to use transit
- Other
 - Taxi
 - Bicycle
 - Pedestrian amenities
 - Trail information
 - Greyhound/Amtrak
 - Flex Car
 - Commuter Information:
 - Vanpool/carpool
 - EZ Pass/Smart Card
 - Airport information
 - General flight information
 - Security line time
 - Parking
 - Capacity

What questions do we ask? – Transportation user survey

The following suggestions were made:

- In Question #2, ask people to prioritize, rather than just check all which apply.
- Add “Ride Share Information” to Question #1 answers.
- In Question #2, distinguish what type of Airport information (travel by airplane, getting to the airport, parking at the airport, security line time, which airport, etc.).
- Add “Commuteinfo.org” and “Newspapers” to Question #4 answers.
- Rephrase Question #6 to read “If there were more information available, what would you like to see?”



- Rephrase Questions #7 and #8 to ask if people have heard of 511, rather than if they have used it and how useful it was.
- Ask for home zip code to categorize respondents.
- Ask for respondents to prioritize answers, rather than checking all that apply.
- Include optional, open-ended questions to give respondents the opportunity to share more information.
- Add questions to categorize respondents: Southwestern PA resident versus visitor.
 - Add question to ask what types of trips they normally take.

It was asked if there will be workshops in the 511 process. It was answered that stakeholder outreach will be part of the 511 development process and PennDOT will meet with various groups, such as the SPC, to glean feedback about regional priorities.

How do we reach the traveling public? – Identify publicity plans/distribution opportunities for survey

- Hockey season
- Football season
- Convention center
- Links on other local websites (i.e. wpxi.com)
- Library computers
- AAA
- Post-Gazette and other newspapers
- Transportation/traffic reporters
- Post cards
- Bus/transit (cards with web address)
- Email distribution lists from organizations
- Highway message boards
- Billboards
- Radio (during traffic reports)
- Consideration for reaching people without computer access (ATWIC may help)

Summarize Next Steps

Glenda Murphy said that the information provided today will be taken into consideration and the survey will be adjusted and shared within SPC. Any help in getting the word out about the survey would be appreciated.

It was asked if statistics from other states will be used to find out what people look for regarding traveler information. Max Heckman said that it will be part of this task. Glenda Murphy said that ITS America did a survey in 2001 which includes this type of information.

Other Business/Adjournment

Doug Smith said that on October 29-30, SPC will host a training course on how to conduct road safety audits. The course will be held in the Regional Enterprise Tower's A.E. Hunt conference room on the 23rd floor. Interested parties may register through NHI's website.



Dom D'Andrea said that the SPC has applications for local governments to apply to be involved in a traffic signal program (retiming of and minor upgrades to traffic signals). The deadline for applications is October 17, 2008.

Doug Smith said that at 1:00 today there is a meeting of the Congestion Management Work Group for Downtown and Oakland. There will be a meeting in October for western Allegheny County and Washington County and a meeting in November for Allegheny Valley, Kiski Valley and Armstrong County. SPC is rethinking the approach due to low attendance at these work group meetings and may consider trying to get on the agendas for other meetings next year (such as Councils of Government meetings).

Brenda Murphy said that the ITSPA Western Regional Outreach will meet on October 8, 2008 at Calabria's Restaurant for a highway safety talk by Doug Tomlinson and Darrell St. Clair.

The meeting ended at approximately 11:45 am.

Minutes prepared by Jackie Freeman, Olszak Management Consulting, Inc.