

I. Introduction

This document presents comments received and responses to comments for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's (SPC) public comment period from June 9 through July 13, 2010 on the following draft documents:

- *2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania*
- *Environmental Justice Benefits and Burdens Assessment for the 2011-2014 TIP*
- *Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Pittsburgh Transportation Management Area for the 2011-2014 TIP and the 2035 Plan*
- *Amendment to the 2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania (2035 Plan)*

All comments and responses in this Public Participation Report were distributed to members of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission for their review prior to the July 26, 2010 meeting for action to consider the above items.

The development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Southwestern Pennsylvania is a collaborative effort that requires the participation of the members of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, including the Counties of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland, and the City of Pittsburgh, PennDOT, our modal and funding partners, members of the SPC Public Participation Panels, the general public, and other interested parties.

The Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania is the outcome of a comprehensive and on-going transportation planning process and represents a consensus among state and regional officials as to what near-term improvements to pursue. Consensus is crucial because, before committing significant sums of money, the federal and state governments require assurances that interested parties have participated in developing the priorities. A project's inclusion in the TIP signifies regional consensus on the priority of the project and establishes eligibility for federal funding. This consensus is coordinated through the efforts of two SPC technical committees – the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and Transit Operators Committee (TOC) – which work cooperatively to develop the recommended program of projects. Staff representatives from SPC, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the planning departments of each SPC member county and the City of Pittsburgh, the region's urban and rural transit operators, and the general public actively participate in the development and ongoing maintenance of the TIP.

The design of the 2011-2014 Transportation Program (2011-2014 TIP) began almost immediately upon adoption of the 2009-2012 TIP in 2008. In 2008, the 2009-2012 TIP was revised to reflect a number of modifications to specific projects in accordance with SPC's established TIP modification processes and procedures.

In 2009, the 2009-2012 TIP was updated to reflect the advancement of projects that were funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Economic Stimulus). The SPC Transportation Technical Committee and Transit Operators Committee held special meetings on Friday, February 27, 2009, to recommend specific projects for inclusion in the amended 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. The Commission held a special meeting on Monday, March 9, 2009, to consider amendments to the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program to formally include the Stimulus funded projects. A 30-day public comment period on this TIP Amendment was conducted in February and March of 2009, and a public meeting was held on March 9, 2009.

Opportunities for public comment on other TIP amendments were also held in 2009, including the Rochester Bridge renovation project in Beaver County, renovations to several bridges along SR422 in Lawrence County, and the Brighton Road Extension project in the City of Pittsburgh. In addition, TIP amendments were completed in 2009 to include reference to PennDOT funded projects under the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI) funding program.

In September and October of 2009, SPC solicited applications for funding under the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program for transportation projects which would result in improved Air Quality in the region through the elimination of congestion or through the use of new technology to reduce air emissions.

Applications for 53 new candidate projects were received. A CMAQ Evaluation Committee was convened in October in accordance with SPC's adopted CMAQ evaluation process. The Committee followed SPC's established process for reviewing, scoring, and prioritizing the candidate CMAQ projects. A prioritized list of 43 recommended projects was finalized by the Committee on December 7, 2009. Of the 43 recommended projects, there was sufficient CMAQ funding available to program the 17 highest-ranked projects on the 2011-2014 TIP.

Also beginning in fall 2009, SPC participated in a series of meetings with PennDOT District personnel, planning staff from SPC member counties and the City of Pittsburgh, members of the Public Participation Panels, and other interested parties to identify funding availability and help identify transportation priorities for the 2011-2014 TIP. These meetings continued through spring 2010, and included a review of the result of the regional technical evaluation processes for potential new candidate projects. The draft 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania (2011-2014 TIP) that was developed as a result of this cooperative process identifies the priority highway and transit improvements programmed for

advancement from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2014 (federal fiscal years 2011-2014).

Many projects identified on the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program were also included in the previous TIP, the 2009-2012 Transportation Program. This carryover results from the need for the regional TIP to list the specific projects and also document the anticipated schedule and cost for each project phase (preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction). The TIP identifies the cost and schedule (by year) for each project phase, and the total project cost and funding source. Most projects on the TIP move forward in a series of project phases, moving through preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction over successive years. As the TIP is updated on a two-year cycle, projects frequently appear on the TIP for multiple years.

II. Organization of Report

This report includes a Summary of Public Comments and the Response to Public Comments on the following documents:

- *2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania*
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SPC staff has responded to each comment and shared both the comments and responses with the SPC Commissioners.

- **Part 1** includes the Summary of Public Comments and the Response to Public Comments.
- **Part 2** includes summaries of Public Participation Panel meetings that were held during the June 9 through July 13, 2010 public comment period.
- **Part 3** includes copies of the written and electronic comments that were received during the June 9 through July 13, 2010 public comment period.
- **Part 4** includes documentation of the public outreach activities during the June 9 through July 13, 2010 public comment period.