

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of
April 26, 2010 – 4:30 p.m.
31st Floor • Regional Enterprise Tower • 425 Sixth Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15219

The eighty-third meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Charles Camp.

Commission members present were: Tom Balya, Stephen Bland, Andrew Boni, Bracken Burns, Charles Camp, Tom Ceraso, Daniel Cessna, Dave Coder, Jack Cohen, Steve Craig, Terry Daughenbaugh, Karl Eisaman, Kevin Gray, Lynn Heckman, Dave Johnston, John Paul Jones, Jim Kennedy, Jack Macheck, Larry Maggi, Robbie Matesic, Kevin McCullough, David Miller, Mary Jo Morandini, A. Dale Pinkerton, Carmen Rozzi, Rod Ruddock, Mark Schneider, Kelly Shroads, Michael Silvestri, Pam Snyder, Joe Spanik, Vincent Vicites, Norma Wintermyer, and Yarone Zober.

Commission members absent were: Tony Amadio, Shirl Barnhart, Rick DeBlasio, Joseph Dubovi, Patricia Evanko, Richard Fink, David Frick, Jim Gagliano, Jr., Jessica Greathouse, Dana Henry, Donald Kinosz, Patricia Kirkpatrick, James Lokhaiser, Robert Macey, Dan Onorato, William Peduto, William Piper, Luke Ravenstahl, James Ritzman, Jim Scahill, Robert Schiffbauer, Richard Shaw, Renee Sigel, Mark Snyder, Anthony Spossey, Byron Stauffer, Jr., Rob Stephany, Wendy Stern, Joe Szczur, Letitia Thompson, Daniel Vogler, Gealy Wallwork, Jake Wheatley, Jr., and Vincent Zapotosky.

Staff: Jim Hassinger, Kirk Brethauer, Chuck DiPietro, Ryan Gordon, Chuck Imbrogno, Mary Beth Kim, Vince Massaro, Marge Nalesnick, Shannon O'Connell, Dee Pamplin, Rachel Roché, Lisa Kay Schweyer, Kay Tomko, Debbie Tritsch, Lew Villotti, and Sara Walfoort.

Others: Jon Smith, Allegheny County Transit Council; and John Verbanac, SPC Consultant.

1. Action on Minutes of the March 29th Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2010 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission by Commissioner Pinkerton which was seconded by Mark Schneider. The affirmative vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.

2. Public Comment

None

Commissioner Camp along with all the Commissioners present congratulated Commissioner Tom Ceraso on his new position, wishing him well.

County Project – Steve Bland

Steve Bland reported on the progress of the North Shore Connector Project. Showing a slide of a graphic from the Post Gazette on the developments occurring on the North Shore from three years ago, he said that three years ago this was a plan and it's now coming to fruition. The North Shore Connector will help to connect the Golden Triangle with the North Shore as well as Station Square for an extended downtown region. Some of the key projects the stadiums, the casino, the hotels, office developments, and most recently ground was broken on an entertainment venue across from Heinz Field. From a regional prospective, during a period of pretty weak job activity, in our peak of construction, we were supporting about 3,000 construction jobs not just the construction workers on site, but subcontractors, suppliers, and engineering firms throughout the region. A key component of this is that of the top 30 contractors on this job, 24 are located in Southwestern Pennsylvania with 12 in Allegheny County. The project is about 70-75% complete to date, and change orders have actually brought the price of the project down \$1M below bid prices. The first significant project we refer to combine the Twin Bore Tunnels, and the Cut & Cover Tunnel on the North Shore. This project is \$100% complete. All tunneling activity is finished and on schedule actually reducing the cost of this contract by \$1.5-\$1.6M. The second element is the Gateway Station which we are

in the process of excavating. The next major project element is the aerial structure on the North Shore which will wrap up in May or June. The next segment is the train system which includes substation tower that powers the trains, signals, communication, video surveillance, and alarm systems. This segment is about 20% complete. There will be three new stations on the line--the new Gateway Station, North Side Station which will be underneath the FCA Parking Garage, then the Allegheny Station over Allegheny Avenue at Reedsdale. About 15% of the stations work is done, with the North Side Station being furthest along. We expect to be completing all construction activities by the fall of 2011. That leaves about five months for system testing and training. We anticipate revenue service operation to begin in March of 2012.

3. SPC Staff Profile – Ryan Gordon

Chuck DiPietro introduced staff member, Ryan Gordon. Ryan is a transportation planner and has been with us just over 2½ years. Weeks after Ryan joined us, he and his wife Angela, had their first child, Martin. He is a graduate of GSPIA, graduating in 2005 with a strong technical background in environmental planning, geography and GIS. He joined us after six years with Skelly & Loy and brings a strong technical approach to projects.

Ryan began with an overview of his education and experience. Ryan holds an MPA from the University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. Previously Ryan worked for Skelly & Loy as an environmental planner working on a variety of NEPA activities producing compliance documents, for PennDOT, West Virginia DOH, and the Turnpike Commission. Prior to working for Skelly & Loy, Ryan worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Administration for one year. Ryan's role within SPC's Transportation Department is to provide support to the TIP management, TTC operations, and financial planning. In addition, Ryan is involved in "Linking Planning and NEPA" activities, and intermodal initiatives, such as conducting bicycle suitability analysis and developing associated mapping.

4. Financial Report – Vince Massaro

Mr. Massaro reported that the financial report reflects the operations of the Corporation, the Commission, and the Regional Enterprise Tower. There has been little change from the February report. Planning projects continue as scheduled and will be completed by June 30, 2010. Some projects because of their funding and contractual obligations are expected to carry-over into the next fiscal year. One such project is the Regional Traffic Signal Design. This is the SINC UP Project that Domenic D'Andrea is working on with the local municipalities.

The financials are 75% complete through the fiscal year March 31. Total revenues relating to the operations for the Regional Enterprise Tower are \$4,989,714 to date through March is \$3,797,002 or 76.10% of the budget recognized for the nine-month period. Expenditures are at \$4.8M budgeted \$3.7M though the end of March or 77% of the budget recognized. The RET is currently at 80% occupancy that still includes two core tenants and partners in the mission of the building, that being Visit Pittsburgh and Allegheny Conference. Visit Pittsburgh will be moving to other space at the end of August and we are still in discussions with Allegheny Conference on renewing their lease that expires at the end of September. With Visit Pittsburgh leaving and if the Allegheny Conference decides to leave, too, it will cause a significant shortfall in the cash available to the building to meet operating expenses. The building has a \$13M debt service remaining and it has to be funded at an amount of \$1.2M per year. These two tenants provide about \$800,000 in revenues.

At the SPC Property Management Committee meeting earlier today, it was decided that the staff should schedule a creditors meeting with the bank to discuss the situation and see what can be done to resolve the issue of cash flow or transferring the building. It will become a cash flow issue by early fall.

The Audit Services RFP was sent out in March. We expect at least five proposals which are due by April 30, 2010. An in-house review committee will look at the proposals and make recommendations to Dr. Hassinger and the Audit Committee.

Commissioner Camp added that the Corporation Board and Executive Committee at its earlier meeting addressed the RET's cash flow situation and occupancy issues and they appointed a committee to come up with alternatives to be able to respond before these turn of events happen. The Corporation Board of Directors and Commission Executive Committee will take action on the direction we decide to go or offers we make.

5. Action on Resolution 5-10 to Proclaim May as CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month – Lisa Kay Schweyer

Lisa Kay brought the Commission Members up-to-date on SPC's CommuteInfo Program. She introduced the other CommuteInfo team members: Mary Beth Kim and Rachel Roche. She then announced that there are several partner organizations who we work with who are here today:

- Beaver County Transit Authority
- Carmen Rozzi
- PennDOT
- Westmoreland County Commissioners
- Port Authority of Allegheny County

She spoke about some of the other people we have met through the CommuteInfo program (some of whom may be your constituents, neighbors, friends or family members):

- Scott who "...rides [his] bike part way to work because it guarantees that [he] will never get caught up in a downtown traffic jam."
- Dan from Pittsburgh who says he has "...been a rider of the van from Pittsburgh to Wheeling since last October and [he doesn't] think [he] could have kept [his] job ... if not for the van."
- Patricia from Canonsburg who shared that "With an hour+ commute each day, driving a V8 truck into downtown Pittsburgh each day is not a good option. Today, [she] drive[s] half way and picks up the [Port Authority of Allegheny County] trolley @ South Hills Village" and Gretchen from Apollo/Leechburg who calculated her savings by riding the bus to be \$3,644.50 annually.
- Johnna from Trafford said "[She] attended a seminar on the CommuteInfo Program. [She is] getting ready to move to Lawrenceville with the rest of the Children's Hospital Staff. [She] was given a lot of good information at the seminar and ... now reviewing ... choices for [her] commute to the new hospital. [She] registered and received a list of people who are just like [her]..."

In your meeting packet, you will find a CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month handout. It highlights the award winning year CommuteInfo has had, various projects we have been working on including the Street Smarts campaign (partnership with the TMAs), the Bike Facility at The Century Building in downtown Pittsburgh, a story about a vanpooler who recently retired and program statistics.

As we work to continue to reach more commuters and employers in the region, help them find a better way to work or school, and change commuting behavior, I'll make the last introduction to Resolution No. 5-10 in your board packet as we ask that the month of May be proclaimed CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month.

Commissioner Rozzi moved:

WHEREAS, approximately sixty percent of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region's 1.5 million workers travel outside their resident municipality to work; and

WHEREAS, commuting options are an integral part of the region's employers and workers life; reducing the number of people driving to work alone can benefit the region by easing traffic congestion and improving air quality; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all employers and commuters in the region are aware of all available commuting options; and

WHEREAS, CommuteInfo celebrates over 30 years of promoting commuting options in the region by providing information about transit, sponsoring vanpools, helping arrange carpools, providing commuter safety information, promoting biking and walking, and providing information about park-n-ride facilities through the program website www.commuteinfo.org or by calling toll-free 1-888-819-6110; and

WHEREAS, the month of May includes National Transportation Week, National Bike to Work Day, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, and National Clean Air Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission encourages the citizens of this region to welcome and emphasize the value of ridesharing, and offers support by proclaiming May 2010 as "CommuteInfo Commute Options Awareness Month" in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Commissioner Boni seconded and the affirmative vote to approve Resolution 5-10 was unanimous.

Commissioner Camp asked Commissioner Craig to explain an action from Regional Policy Advisory Committee to the Commission Executive Committee which was to support a new program moving through the legislature in Washington, D. C. supported by Senator Arlen Specter called the Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zone Program (RIIZ). It proposes a change in the tax code to allow private businesses to dedicate a portion of their tax funds to infrastructure projects. It's a process that would be between private industry, the MPOs (which is SPC) and local organizations where the infrastructure hits the ground. It's a process that is multi-state, supported by the Kentucky-Indiana and Ohio Regional Council, DVRPC, and East Gate Development Corporation. It originates from the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC).

6. Action on Resolution 6-10 to Amend the 2009-2012 TIP to Reconstruct Six U.S. 422 Bridges in New Castle - Chuck DiPietro

Mr. DiPietro stated that Resolution 6-10 is for a Highway Amendment to the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include bridge preservation of six bridges on U.S. 422, (Ben Franklin Highway) in Lawrence County.

Commissioner Craig moved:

WHEREAS, PENNDOT District 11-0 requests adding these bridge preservation projects on U.S. 422, (Ben Franklin Highway) to the region's 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for construction; and

WHEREAS, the six structurally deficient bridges are located on U.S. 422 (Ben Franklin Highway) in the City of New Castle and Taylor, Union & Shenango Townships, Lawrence County; and

WHEREAS, this project consists of bridge preservation work on six structurally deficient bridges that will include latex overlays, new strip seal dams, replacement of rocker bearings, concrete repairs to deteriorated substructure units, and full painting of the bridges over the Shenango River. Also included is U.S. 422 pavement reconstruction that includes portions of full depth concrete replacement and asphalt overlay between the structures; and

WHEREAS, the sources of funds (\$28.6 million total project cost) are from additional bridge funds to the region (\$18 million), various other project cost savings (\$5 million), and line item draw down funding (\$6 million) in FFY 2010 & 2011; and

WHEREAS, the proposed TIP amendment will maintain overall TIP fiscal balance and will not interfere with the implementation of any projects, commitments, or requirements of applicable State Implementation Plans (SIPs); and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment was made available for public review and comment consistent with SPC's established public review procedures from March 24th continuing through April 23rd, including a public meetings held on April 8th; and

WHEREAS, documentation of the public review and comment period, including public comments received to date on the TIP amendment and responses to comments to date have been compiled and presented to the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the Transportation Technical Committee and recommended for approval in accordance with SPC's TIP amendment policies and public involvement process; and

WHEREAS, approval of the proposed amendment to the 2009-2012 TIP will not alter the finding of conformity with the federal Clean Air Act for the 2035 Long Range Plan and 2009-2012 TIP since the affected project is categorized by EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93) as being exempt from regional emissions analysis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves this amendment to the 2009-2012 TIP.

Commissioner Ceraso seconded and the affirmative vote to approve Resolution 6-10 was unanimous.

7. Action on Resolution 7-10 to Amend the 2009-2010 TIP to Reprogram \$7,200,000 of Obligated Federal Transit Fixed Guideway Improvement Funds from the East Busway Repavement Project to the Fixed Guideway Improvement Line Item – Chuck DiPietro

Chuck DiPietro stated that Resolution 7-10 is a request from the Port Authority of Allegheny County to amend the FFY 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add funding for the project: "Fixed Guideway Improvements Project" in the amount of \$7,200,000 of Federal Fixed Guideway Modernization (Section 5309) funds and to reduce funding for the project: "East Busway Repavement Project" in the amount of \$7,200,000 of Federal Fixed Guideway Modernization (Section 5309) funds.

Commissioner Burns moved:

WHEREAS, the East Busway Repavement project scope has changed resulting in a significant decrease in project cost; and,

WHEREAS, transferring the funding to the Fixed Guideway Improvements Project will enable Port Authority of Allegheny County to implement additional “State of Good Repair” improvements during 2010; and,

WHEREAS, both projects are existing fixed guideway projects funded with obligated Federal Fixed Guideway Modernization (Section 5309) program funds; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed action conforms with SPC’s TIP amendment policies and public involvement process, does not change TIP fiscal balance, does not affect any STIP project, or affect the region’s air quality conformity determination; and,

WHEREAS, the Transit Operators Committee (TOC) of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission at its regular meeting on April 21, 2010 took action to recommend that this amendment request be approved by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, recognizing first its collective interests in the well-being of its residents and in the continued effective operations of the overall transportation system, approves the Port Authority of Allegheny County’s request to increase funding for the project: “Fixed Guideway Improvements Project” in the amount of \$7,200,000 and to reduce funding for the project: “East Busway Repavement Project” in the amount of \$7,200,000.

Mark Schneider seconded and the affirmative vote to approve Resolution 7-10 was unanimous.

8. Status Report on Draft 2011-2014 TIP – Chuck DiPietro

Mr. DiPietro gave an update on the TIP as we move to asking for adoption at the July meeting.

SPC SHARE OF STATEWIDE DISCRETIONARY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED (\$144.6 M)

Secretary’s Spike Program – 31.2% of funds distributed (\$121.7 M)

Act 44 Discretionary – 19.1% (\$22.9 M)

SPC SPIKE PROJECTS (\$121.7 M)

Masontown Bridge - \$43.49 M

Freeport Bridge - \$17 M

Hulton Bridge - \$24 M

SR 228 Mars RR Bridge - \$17.186 M

District 12-0 Small Bridge Initiative - \$20 M

SPC ACT 44 DISCRETIONARY PROJECTS (\$22.9 M)

Taylor Run Bridge – \$0.88 M

Dougherty’s Mills Bridge - \$3.94 M

3010/Moffits Mill/Bridge/Racoon - \$2.81 M

New Galilee Road Bridge - \$0.56 M

East Brook Road Bridge - \$1.2 M

Crescent Drive Bridge - \$1.30 M

State Street Bridge/Sankey Road - \$2.16 M

224 State Street over NS RR - \$3.94 M

PA 65/Second Street Bridge - \$6.08 M

STATEWIDE SPIKE PROGRAM REMAINING LINE ITEMS (\$100.5 M)

Hometown Streets/Safe Routes to School (\$8.4 M)

Statewide ITS Initiative (\$44.1 M)

Smart Transportation Initiative (\$48 M)

ROUND 5 TIP UPDATE WORK SESSIONS

April 14th – District 11-0

April 20th – District 10-0

April 23rd – District 12-0

TIP UPDATE UPCOMING SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

May 3rd – June 3rd – Air Quality & Environmental Justice Assessments

May 3rd – June 3rd – Documents Development

June 9th – July 13th – Public Comment Period (including PPP Public Meetings)

July 26th – Request Commission Adoption

Mike Silvestri asked if the full Commission can view the Draft 2011-2014 program of projects well in advance of the July 26th request for approval. Chuck DiPietro responded we can share the draft program with the full Commission as soon as we process it in late May.

9. Staff Report/Other Business/Announcements – Jim Hassinger

Dr. Hassinger updated the Commission Members on a couple matters, one being the Power of 32 Group is moving along in terms of preparations for a series of community workshops throughout the 32-county region, with the assistance of “America Speaks”. The SPC staff is helping out on developing the additional information needed beyond SPC borders, neighboring development districts, MPOs and the state. That information has come together. The Power of 32 Group is going to do training for facilitators in this room in a couple of weeks.

Another thing that we’re doing is advancing a Regional Application for the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant Program. We’ve had a meeting with interested parties, invited planning partners from member jurisdictions as well as sustainable interest groups and we are working to take advantage of what we believe to be the best opportunity to obtain money from what will be a highly competitive federal program by creating a regional application that takes advantage of the assets and interest of the variety of works of regional applications.

Several foundations are going to be meeting to discuss the applicability of our water program for some potential funding which should be happening in a month or so. We’re looking for funding from whatever source we can find it to move that project along.

Commissioner Balya asked about email updates on news stories. Dr. Hassinger responded that we email stories with links on occasion and we can do more of that if you’re interested in that. We’ve tried to gauge interest in a couple of different methods, E-mail links, and we do have paper copies. We’ll look at expanding the e-mailings as efficiently as we can.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Craig
Secretary-Treasurer