

Meeting Minutes for July 15th, 2010
Transportation Technical Committee Meeting
Regional Enterprise Tower - Pittsburgh, PA

Attendees:

- Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County Economic Development
Steve Shanley, Allegheny County Department of Public Works
- Darin Alviano, Armstrong County Planning Commission*
- James Camp, Beaver County Public Works
- Joel MacKay, Butler County
- Arthur Cappella, Fayette County Planning Commission
- William Deguffroy, Indiana County Planning Commission
- Pat Hassett, Pittsburgh Department of Public Works
- Jeff Leithauser, Washington County Planning Department
- Chris Bova, Westmoreland County Planning Department
Brian Lawrence, Westmoreland County Planning Department
Deborah Suci Smith, Federal Highway Administration
- Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office
Dave Cook, PennDOT District 10-0
Dan Cessna, PennDOT District 11-0
Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, PennDOT District 11-0
Jeff Skalican, PennDOT District 11-0
Stacy Rabatin, PennDOT District 12-0*
Angela Saunders, PennDOT District 12-0*
Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Management Association
Liz Tillman, Oakland Transportation Management Association
Tracy Stack, DCNR
Matthew Santoni, Tribune-Review
Chuck DiPietro, SPC Staff
Chuck Imbrogno, SPC Staff
Doug Smith, SPC Staff
Domenic D'Andrea, SPC Staff
Matt Pavlosky, SPC Staff
Dave Totten, SPC Staff
Ryan Gordon, SPC Staff
- (Indicates Voting Member)
- * Indicates participation via conference call

1. June 17th, 2010 TTC Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)

Chuck DiPietro called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The June 17th, 2010 meeting minutes were approved with one word change on page three noted by Kevin McCullough (“The next set of financial guidance will ~~include~~ consider a commitment to local bridges”).

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. FHWA/PennDOT Central Office Reports

a.) Livability: A presentation for Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations

Deborah Suci-Smith conducted a presentation on livability and sustainable communities partnership with US DOT, US HUD, and US EPA. The presentation included a general overview of the partnership and its collective goals and principles, funding programs, and program issues and challenges. Funding sources that support the livability concept include CMAQ, TIGER II grants, and Transportation Enhancements. Deborah noted that there have been proposals for reauthorization with varying levels of focus on livability. Cheryl Moon- Sirianni noted when discussing program match scenarios, we should be reluctant to recommend removing all local match requirements, because it removes local stake/interest in the project. Cheryl also suggested something could be done in allowing donation credits to extend to local municipalities for local match portion of projects. Deborah referred everyone to the web site (www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability) for more information on the partnership.

b. HUD’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

HUD’s Community Challenge Planning Grants and TIGER II Planning Grants

Chuck DiPietro noted that there are two distinct grant programs with almost identical structure that are being made available jointly through the DOT/HUD partnership.

- Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program – focused on regional projects that must include the MPO in the application. SPC is pursuing these funds and coordinating an application under Lew Villotti’s direction with a variety of regional partners.

- HUD Sustainable Community Challenge Grants - these are tied to the US DOT TIGER II grants. TIGER II planning grants will fund planning, preparation, or design of surface transportation projects that would be eligible for funding under the TIGER II Discretionary Grant Program. Chuck noted that this program

(Attachment A)

targets more localized planning efforts on a community or project level to achieve more sustainable communities through transportation planning. Chuck noted that this might be a good match for a wide range of projects already underway throughout the region with the involvement of many TTC members.

Cheryl Moon-Sirianni noted that District 11-0 has run into some problems with the use of the HUD funds for construction due to differing contract requirements. Chuck DiPietro noted that both of these grant programs are for funds to be used in planning. Lynn Heckman noted that the contract regulations associated with the NOFA for the HUD Community Challenge Grants is very complex including a significant amount of requirements.

c.) FHWA Organizational Change (Attachment B)

Deborah Suci-Smith reviewed Attachment B, which was the letter from Renee Sigel announcing the new staff members in the Pennsylvania Division Office. Deborah noted that a new position has been created (Director of Program Development), which has been filled by Keith Lynch, who came to FHWA from FTA in Philadelphia.

d.) PCTI Round 2 Status Report

Kevin McCullough reported that the official notice of the second round of PCTI grants was announced on July 14th. The Department has set aside \$24 million in the first two years of the draft 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to support potential projects that exhibit Smart Transportation principles. The Department will be soliciting project applications from communities to participate in the second round of the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI), which will be funded through the draft 2011-2014 TIP. Kevin noted that last time around \$60 million was available statewide through PCTI funding and this second round \$24 million will be available statewide for the first two years.

Kevin stated that program guidance has been developed to help walk sponsors through the application process and is available on the PCTI website. The application and directions for submission are much more focused this time around and are designed to be completed and submitted on-line. The deadline for all PCTI applications is September 15th.

Dan Cessna noted that each eligible project may receive up to \$1.5 million for the pre-construction and construction phases and there is a \$300,000 cap on planning proposals. Dan clarified that the total project costs can be over \$1.5 million if other funding exists for the project. Dan stated that he believes the well developed application criteria will provide better project proposal information to assist in evaluation of the proposals. Dan noted that sponsors should understand that quick project deliverability is a critical factor

in having a competitive proposal.

Kevin McCullough elaborated saying that the Department will be taking a strict view of the “ready to go” status of the proposals. Kevin stated that the Department is looking for good projects that can be delivered quickly. Dan Cessna noted that a good strategy for sponsors is to complete the preliminary design with their own funds. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni noted that sponsors don’t typically realize that a consultant selection under PennDOT requirements could take eight months. Jeff Leithauser questioned how far project design can proceed without PennDOT involvement. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni recommended that the project sponsors hire a consultant that has experience working with PennDOT Districts on preliminary design to assist project development. Cheryl noted that another thing that can delay a project that may appear to be ready-to-go is property acquisition for right-of-way. Stacy Rabatin noted that utilities can similarly delay a project that appears to be ready-to-go.

Tracy Stack asked when the award announcements would be expected. Kevin replied that he anticipates November.

e.) August 12th STC Quarterly Meeting

Chuck DiPietro stated that the STC Quarterly Meeting will be held on August 12th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel at the Airport from 10:00 to Noon. At this session, the Committee will be taking action on the Twelve Year Program/STIP.

f.) Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad Diesel Retrofit project

Kevin noted that a ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad (B&PRR) rail yard on July 12th to announce the completion of the CMAQ funded Diesel Retrofit project. Chuck Imbrogno elaborated that the B&PRR applied for CMAQ funds three years ago. Two years ago CMAQ funds were flexed to FRA for the project. Chuck Imbrogno stated the total project cost was \$1.5 million and the project is anticipated to cut yard locomotive emissions by half. Chuck added that the project is the first of its kind for the region and the technology was manufactured by GE in Erie. Sara Walfoort noted that the B&PRR was very excited about this project and hopes to replicate it in other regions. Kevin noted that there are two other diesel retrofit projects programmed in 2014.

4. Action on Amendments and Modifications to the 2009 to 2012 TIP

The current administrative action and amendment procedures are attached following these meeting minutes.

a.) PennDOT District 10-0 (Attachment C and Handout 1)

Dave Cook of PennDOT District 10-0 pointed to the amendment requests and administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 10-0 had one amendment request this month:

- o Cherry Valley Bridge #4 – adding the Department Force Bridge project and final design to the TIP. Dave explained that the amendment amounted to switching the schedules of the Cherry Valley #4 bridge and the Hooker Road Bridge #2 to prioritize the Cherry Valley bridge project.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 10-0 amendment and administrative action requests to the TIP.

b.) PennDOT District 11-0 (Attachment D and Handout 2)

Jeff Skalican noted that District 11-0 had only administrative actions this month. Jeff highlighted two administrative actions: the Aliquippa School District tails project, which is a TE project and the William Penn Avenue Slide project. The administrative actions were all straight forward and there were no questions.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the PennDOT District 11-0 and administrative action requests to the TIP.

c.) PennDOT District 12-0 (Attachment E)

Stacy Rabatin of PennDOT District 12-0 pointed to the administrative actions to the 2009-2012 TIP. District 12-0 had no amendments this month. Stacy highlighted one administrative action on the ARRA funded project, West Newton Bridge.

The TTC motioned and unanimously approved the District 12-0 administrative action requests to the TIP.

5. Report on Public Comment Period Draft 2011-2014 TIP

Matt Pavlosky thanked all the county planning office staff and the PennDOT District staff that assisted in the public meetings that were conducted for the Draft 2011-2014. Matt referred everyone to the meeting handout that summarized the activities during the public comment period. Matt reviewed the meeting announcement, the public review locations, locations of all meetings, the number of attendees at all events, and press coverage. Matt noted that 84 comments were received and provided a brief summary of the comments. Matt reported that the

(Attachment A)

overall number of formal comments was down from the previous TIP update, he attributed this to the early outreach that was held along with the format of the public meetings (separating the formal testimony from the informal questions and answers). Matt noted that the Final TIP document will include a summary of all public involvement activities.

6. Air Quality Conformity Determination for Draft 2011-2014 TIP and Companion 2035 Plan Amendment (to reflect Draft TIP)

Chuck Imbrogno stated that the conformity determination went out for public comment along with the Draft TIP and no comments were received on the conformity document. Chuck noted that the conformity document did go through an interagency review, which resulted in several minor edits. Chuck provided a brief overview of the complexity of the analysis that was conducted for the 10 separate nonattainment areas covered in the conformity determination.

7. EJ Assessment

Sara Walfoort stated that the EJ assessment document went out for public comment along with the Draft TIP and no comments were received. Sara provided a brief overview of the analysis conducted for the EJ assessment and noted that there have been no changes made to the public comment version of the EJ assessment document.

8. Action to Recommend Commission Adoption of 2011-2014 TIP

9. Action to Recommend Commission Adoption of 2035 Plan Amendment (to reflect TIP adoption)

Chuck DiPietro thanked all the TTC members for their cooperation and hard work in all aspects of development for the draft 2011-2014 TIP. Chuck proposed taking an action to recommend the Draft TIP and all the support documents (Air Quality Conformity, Environmental Justice Assessment, and Long Range Plan Amendment to reflect TIP adoption) for Commission adoption. Chuck DiPietro clarified that the plan action would include a 2035 plan amendment to reflect the TIP adoption, stage one of the plan.

Jim Camp made a motion to recommend that the Commission adopt the Draft TIP and all the support documents. The motion was seconded and then unanimously approved by the TTC.

10. Other Business/Status Reports

a.) Round 1 Regional Signal Program – Status Report (Handout 3)

Domenic D’Andrea reviewed the first page of Handout 3, which detailed the status of the

(Attachment A)

individual Regional Traffic Signal Program projects. Domenic noted that all the SINC-UP projects will be going to construction in the next few months. Overall, the program included signal retiming and equipment upgrades for the SINC-UP projects at 141 traffic signals and for the SINC projects signal retiming at 88 intersections. Domenic reviewed the performance measures table for the 12 projects he has conducted before/after modeling analysis showing an 18% reduction in delay. He stressed that these numbers were produced by a model, but he is working to collect real data to document the actual measurement of benefit. Lucinda Beattie asked Domenic if these numbers are typical with these types of projects. Domenic responded that the model predictions are a little ambitious in his opinion and expects the actual measurement to show more modest improvement. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni noted that there are even more benefits to the program that are not reflected in this table, such as the energy savings to a municipality due to the LED lights upgrades. Pat Hassett noted that within the City the switch to LED lights has had a 70% reduction in the energy bill associated with signals. Cheryl noted that these are the kind of benefits from the program that make the 20% municipal match a good use of local funds. Cheryl stated she fully supports this program and has been working to promote it with municipal governments.

b.) Round 2 Regional Signal Projects – Call for Projects (Handout 3)

Domenic D’Andrea called attention to page two of Handout 3, which was the official request for projects for the 2011 cycle of the SPC Regional Traffic Signal Program. Kevin McCullough asked if there were any special provisions to assist disadvantaged municipalities. Domenic noted that last year the AIM program made low interest loans to several municipalities to cover the 20% local match. Domenic stated that there were several projects that would not have been possible if it were not for this source of loans. Kevin suggested the PA Infrastructure Bank may be another source of loans to assist with local match.

c.) Linking Planning & NEPA Update

Chuck DiPietro reviewed the status of the ongoing PennDOT statewide initiative to redesign the project development process to integrate linking planning and NEPA principals. District outreach in the form of webinars has been conducted and there will be work sessions in each district with Central Office staff, SPC staff, and the SPC member county planning departments to work on the operational details of the new process.

d.) July 14th & August 11th – Transit Operators Committee

Chuck DiPietro reviewed the proceedings of the Transit Operators Committee on July 14th. The TOC took the same actions to recommend the Draft 2011-2014 TIP to the

Commission for adoption. A report on Allegheny County's West Busway TOD Study was also presented.

- e.) August 3rd Operations & Safety Committee – SPC Regional Operations Plan Update – Workshop 2

Doug noted that this meeting was previously scheduled for July 20th, but has been rescheduled for August 3rd. The meeting will continue discussions on what new initiatives can be included in the regional operations plan update. Doug noted that there will be break-put groups that will discuss the emerging areas for inclusion into the Regional Operations and Safety Plan. In addition, potential performance measures related to the plan will be discussed.

- f.) August 11th Pedestrian/Bike Committee

Sara Walfoort briefly reviewed the topics planned for discussion at the upcoming Pedestrian and Bike Committee. Among the items Sara expects will be discussed are the second round of the PCTI funding, Active Allegheny status report, bike suitability mapping status report, Butler City sharrows project, and the Cranberry Township pedestrian study.

- g.) 2010-2011 TTC Meeting Schedule

Chuck referred everyone to the handout meeting schedule that was adopted by the Commission for the 2010/2011 fiscal year.

- h.) Next Transportation Technical Committee – August 26th

- i.) Next Commission Meeting – July 26th and September 20th

Attachment: Current TTC administrative action and amendment procedures

For general information purposes, SPC is using the following administrative action and amendment procedures:

Administrative Actions

To be considered as an administrative action a proposed change must meet the following criteria:

- Exempt from air quality testing
- Does not add or delete an existing project
- No significant change in project scope or design concept
- Maintains overall and year-to-year fiscal balance

Administrative actions may include any of the following types of changes:

- Adds a project for emergency relief purposes except those involving substantial, functional, location, or capacity changes
- Correction of a misprint or data entry error
- Addition or correction of local match funds
- Schedule change, for projects or phases in any of the first three years of the TIP
- Incidental ROW changes
- Change in the funding source
- Exempt projects

New or Deleted Phase

The technical committee can approve an administrative action to add a new phase or delete a phase if the phase cost is \$5 million or less for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project.

Line Items

The recognition/programming on the TIP of specific projects within an approved line item (i.e., betterments, rail-highway crossings, Transit Section 5310 Program, transportation enhancements, local bridges, etc.) is an administrative action as long as the line item is reduced

by the same amount as the eligible project. Line item-based actions require technical committee approval.

For a betterment line item or a rail-highway crossing line item there are no restrictions based on project cost; identification of projects of any amount can be considered as an administrative action. It is also permitted as an administrative action to remove funding from a “line item” project (betterment or rail-highway only) as long as the funds are returned to the respective line item.

Cost Changes

Changes in the cost of a project or project phase can be handled as an administrative action if the cost change is \$5 million or less. A project sponsor is permitted to make an administrative cost change \$1 million or less by reporting the change to the technical committee for informational purposes only. The technical committee must approve a cost change greater than \$1 million but less than \$5 million for a highway project. The action becomes effective when it is forwarded by the technical committee to PennDOT and FHWA or FTA.

Administrative actions do not require Federal approval but FHWA and FTA reserve the right to disallow an administrative action if it is not consistent with federal regulations or the MOU. The project sponsor must provide full documentation prior to SPC acceptance of the requested change and reflecting it on the TIP. SPC and PennDOT will work cooperatively to address and respond to any FHWA and/or FTA comments on these actions.

TIP Amendments

Any project change that cannot be processed within the rules governing administrative actions must be handled as a TIP amendment. A proposed change must be considered as a TIP amendment if it meets any of the following criteria:

- Affects air quality conformity (regardless of funding source)
- Adds or deletes a project (regardless of project cost, except for existing approved line item changes that are considered administrative actions)
- Adds a new project phase or deletes a phase that exceeds \$5 million for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project
- Creates a new line item
- Involves a major change in the project scope of work or design concept
- Changes the project selection status

New or Deleted Project

The technical committee can approve an amendment to add a new project or delete an existing project if the total cost change is \$10 million or less. Total cost changes that exceed \$10 million for a highway project or \$2 million for a transit project require approval by the Commission.

Cost Changes

For changes in the cost of an already approved project or project phase, the dollar level of the change will determine the procedures that are required for approval. Changes of \$5 million or less are administrative actions. Changes that exceed \$5 million are amendments. Cost changes of \$10 million or less can be approved by the technical committee. Changes that exceed \$10 million require approval by the Commission.

Air Quality

Amendments with an air quality impact require air quality testing and a 30-day public comment period including a public meeting before they can be presented to the Commission.

Major Fiscal Impact

Amendments with a fiscal impact that exceeds \$10 million are subject to a 30-day public comment period before they can be presented to the Commission.