

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
December 14, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.  
Cisco Webex Meeting

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

Members: Darin Alviano, Mike Belding, Kevin Boozel, Scott Bricker, Tom Ceraso, Douglas Chew, Mike Coonley, Scott Dunn, Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, James Gagliano, Kim Geyer, Sheila Gombita, Mark Gordon, Robin Gorman, Joe Grata, Kelly Gray, Bob Griffin, Dick Hadley, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Diana Irey Vaughan, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Sean Kertes, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Kevin McCullough, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Mavis Rainey, Bob Regola, Aurora Sharrard, Nick Sherman, Larry Shifflet, and Cheryl Moon-Sirianni.

Others: Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith; Ann Ogoreuc and Anthony Schneider, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development; Janet Feick and Tim Morgus, Maher, Duessel; Jason Rigone, Westmoreland County Planning and Development, and Brandon Stauffer, DCS.

Staff: Vincent Valdes, Belachew Ayele, Kristin Baum, Kirk Brethauer, Ronda Craig, Domenic D’Andrea, Colleen Friend, Ryan Gordon, Chuck Imbrogno, Tom Klevan, Jenn Lasser, Vince Massaro, Shannon O’Connell, Dee Pamplin, Kay Tomko, and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Fitzgerald called to order the December 14, 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 September 28, 2020 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting by Larry Shifflet which was seconded by Leslie Osche. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None
4. Presentation of 2019-2020 Audit Report – Maher Duessel, CPAs Tim Morgus and Janet Feick

Tim Morgus summarized three reports on SPC’s June 30, 2020 Audit Report.

- Communication to Those Charged with Governance
- Audit of the Financial Statements and Single Audit
- Form 990 (Corporation)
- Required Audit Communications
  - Our Responsibilities under Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and Uniform Guidance (UG)
  - Significant Accounting Policies:
    - No new accounting policies were adopted in 2020
  - Accounting Estimates - none
  - Disclosures

- Note 10 regarding impact of COVID-19
- No Disagreements with Management or Difficulties Encountered
- Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements
- Other Matters
- Limited procedures applied to the Required Supplementary Information (RSI) and Supplementary Information (SI)

Janet Feick briefly reported on the Financial Statements stating we were able to issue an unmodified audit opinion on both the government wide and fund presentations within the financial statements. That is the best type of assurance you can receive under the auditing standards.

#### Financial Statements

- Opinions:
  - Unmodified audit opinions issued on both government-wide and fund presentations
- Single Audit
  - Required when expenditures of federal awards are \$750,000 or greater
  - Testing of compliance with certain rules and regulations as well as internal control processes over financial reporting and compliance
- Total Assets of \$13.0 Million
  - Majority of cash is restricted (grants; RLF's)
  - Loans receivable of \$6.3 Million (decrease of \$200,000)
- Total Liabilities of \$12.6 Million
  - Notes payable – PIDA/SBF loan program (\$3.6M)
  - RLF unearned revenue (\$3.7M)
  - Grant advances (\$1.8M)
- Net Position - \$457 Thousand

#### Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance (Page 4)

- Total Revenues: \$10.5 Million
  - Decrease of 6.5% (\$734 Thousand) from prior year
  - Federal and state grants (\$8.3M)
- Total Expenses: \$10.5 Million
  - Corresponding increase in expenditures
- Notes to Financial Statements
  - COVID-19
  - No other new or sensitive disclosures

#### Single Audit Results (Page 41)

- Single Audit
  - Total Federal Expenditures of \$9.8 Million
  - Major Program:
    - *CFDA #20.205 Highway Planning and Construction Cluster*

- Unmodified opinion on compliance for major programs
- No findings or questioned costs reported

5. Financial Report – Vince Massaro

Vince Massaro reported on the financials for the four month period of July 1 through October 31, 2020. Total revenues and related expenditures to date \$6,026,742 versus the approved annual budget of \$13,551,484. This reflects 44.47% of the budget encumbered and utilized to date.

Most of our grants have been fully executed. We have three state grants that we have received five twelve funding for and we are anticipating the remainder seven twelfth for the Prep, Export 2000, and Engage Programs which will be fully funded once we receive those funds we will be fully funded through the end of June. 5-12

Due to Covid-19, most of the staff is working remotely on their projects.

6. Nominating Committee Report and Action on Resolution 15-20 to Elect a Vice-Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer to the Commission – Lynn Heckman, Chair

Ms. Heckman reported on the recommendations from the Nominating Committee stating that in compliance with SPC bylaws and current SPC Officers and Executive Committee Members were elected to two-year terms in January 2020. Subsequently, this year our Vice Chair, Tony Amadio, resigned that position only. We thank him for his service. The Nominating Committee has unanimously recommended to SPC that the current Secretary-Treasurer, Commissioner Leslie Osche of Butler County move up to the Vice Chair position. Additionally, the Committee unanimously recommends that Commissioner Pat Fabian of Armstrong County be elected to the Commission's Secretary-Treasurer position. But before we vote, I want to note that Fayette County has pointed out that it has never had the opportunity to serve in an SPC officer position; ever since they joined in 1996. Commissioner Vicites has withdrawn his candidacy for secretary-treasurer this year, and he's making a strong request for support for this position going to Fayette County next year. Allegheny County concurs with this oversight and one of our valued member counties should be remedied next year.

Now we can proceed with the vote on the Committee recommendations. A motion was made to approve the Nominating Committees recommendation by Tom Ceraso which was seconded by Kim Geyer. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

Chairman Fitzgerald agrees that there has to be representation on the SPC from all the counties including the City of Pittsburgh. I fully support that in the next round Fayette County be considered. I hope others consider that also.

Chairman Fitzgerald congratulated Commissioner Osche and Pat Fabian, and thanked Lynn Heckman and the Nominating Committee. We also want to wish Tony Amadio good health.

7. Action on Resolution 16-20 to Recognize the Accomplishments of our Colleague and Friend, David Miller, who passed away on November 17, 2020 – Rich Fitzgerald

David Miller was a long time member of this board and of the Institute of Politics at the University of Pittsburgh. He was an advocate of good government; government that works together and that we all represent. We are asking for action on Resolution 16-20 to be sent to his family in recognition of his accomplishments throughout his career. A motion was made by Commissioner Osche to approve Resolution 16-20 honoring the services of David Miller which was seconded by Mavis Rainey. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

8. 2020 Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan Overview – Domenic D’Andrea

Mr. D’Andrea gave a brief overview of the 2020 Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan that we recently completed. He will provide fuller details next month when we ask for Commission approval. The Regional Vision is a world-class, safe and well maintained, integrated transportation system that provides mobility for all, enables resilient communities, and supports a globally competitive economy.

One of the regional goals is to implement major projects that maintain our existing system while also enhancing safety, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity across the region.

The original Safety Action Plan was completed in 2015 and the 2020 Safety Action Plan is our first update to that original plan. The importance of this Safety Action Plan is that it:

- Complements PennDOT’s statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan with (regional specific) strategies and potential project locations so that we can work towards achieving our LRTP vision and goals. Pennsylvania and the region are continuously working toward zero deaths.
- Provides the blueprint for improving our required Federal Safety Performance Measures.
- Facilitates attainment of the 5 federal safety performance measure targets for the region
- Enhances, maintains, and supports soft-side programs to improve transportation safety
- Identifies safety improvement projects to be incorporated into the TIP and LRTP using a data-driven process
- Improves safety on the local road network

Other Goals and Objectives:

- Reduce the number and rate of fatalities on all public roads
- Reduce the number and rate of serious injuries on all public roads
- Reduce the number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries on all public roads
- Identify and reduce crashes in all Safety Action Plan focus areas on an annual basis working toward zero deaths.

We had great contributions from our steering committee and stakeholder members which totaled 62 people including staff from FHWA, PennDOT, member counties, and bicycle and pedestrian groups. From April to October we’ve had 7 virtual meetings with the following organizations.



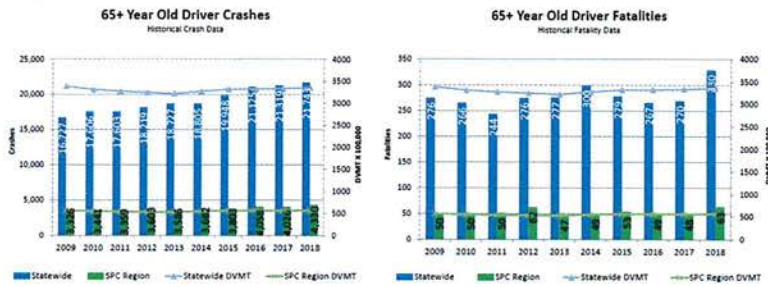
# Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan



There is a lot of data in this Action Plan as shown on the following slide. For example, between the years 2009 and 2018 we have the data on mature driver's statewide crashes. The graph on the left is mature drivers 65+ crashes, and the graph on the right is mature drivers 65+ that resulted in a fatality. As shown, mature driver crashes and mature driver crashes with fatalities are not going down. Because of this upward trend, mature driver crashes get categorized as a regional focus area in the plan.

# Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan

What's in the Plan? Lots of data  
 Sap 2015 Recommended Focus Area Performance



Based on the other similar data which was not trending downward, out of the 33 crash types, this next slide shows 13 crash types that have become the regional safety focus areas for our 2020 Plan.

- Drug related crashes
- Distracted Driving Crashes
- Run-off-road crashes
- Head-on crashes
- Signalized intersection crashes
- Aggressive driving crashes
- Secondary crashes

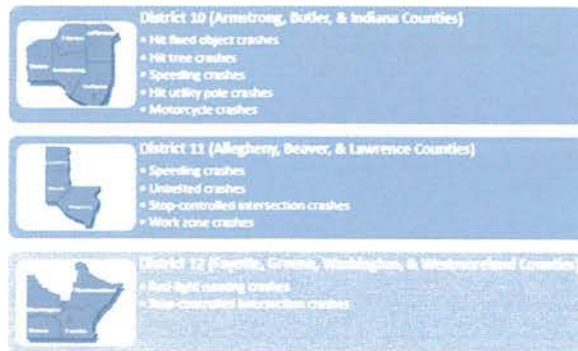
- Mature driver crashes
- Non-motorized (pedestrian/bicycle) crashes
- Intersection crashes
- Transit related crashes
- Heavy truck crashes
- Drowsy driver crashes

These were the focus areas developed for the entire 10-county region.

Similarly, splicing the data further, we also developed Focus Areas per PennDOT District which are shown here in this next slide.

## Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan

### What's in the Plan? District/County Focus areas



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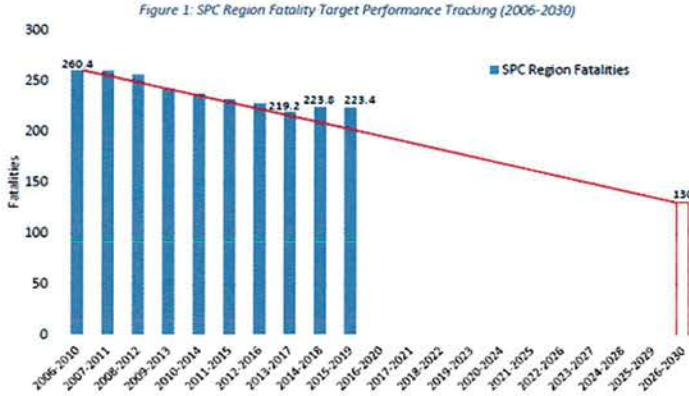
In the Plan, we also highlight the existing available programs that address the focus areas and propose additional new strategies and initiatives to address these focus areas.

The Plan also includes 157 potential safety project locations which were based on two data sets. The primary data set was PennDOT's Highway Safety Manual network screening data which uses the observed historical crash data, predictive equations, as well as expected crash estimates for similar locations. These three factors yield an "excess crash" number which really represents the potential for safety improvement. A high "excess crash" number means that the roadway segment or intersection is underperforming from a safety standpoint. The other data set, crash cluster data, was utilized to determine pedestrian and bicycle safety related project locations.

Let's remember one of our overarching goals set forth in the original 2015 Safety Plan. The goal, based on 5 year rolling averages, was to cut fatalities and serious injuries in half within the 25 year period between 2006 and 2030. In the case of fatalities, as shown on this graph, to go from 260 fatalities to 130. Because we had a spike in fatalities in 2018, you see the blue bar creeping over our red goal line for any average that includes the 2018 data. However, the good news is that the number of fatalities in our region last year, 2019, was the lowest number of fatalities recorded in over 20 years (219).



# Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan



The bad news is that even though the number of serious injury crashes decreased in 2019 when compared to 2018, the overall trend of the past few years is increasing. Why is that happening? Probably because the specific crash types where we do have increases in crashes are the type that have a higher likelihood of serious injuries.

# Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan

2018 total reportable crashes in SPC region: 24,715  
 2019 total reportable crashes in SPC region: 23,873

2018 serious injury crashes: 954  
 2019 serious injury crashes: 923

Crash Frequency	
Crash Type	Increase from 2018 to 2019
Head-on	+140
Aggressive driving	+81
Speeding	+49
Motorcycle	+38
Distracted driving	+36
Bicycle	+20
Pedestrian	+12
Intersection	+6

So, this is just an overview for today...I will dive into more of the details at next month's meeting.

Chairman Fitzgerald said that at the January 25, 2021, meeting we will be looking to approve this Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan. In the meantime I would like to form a subcommittee to discuss this, almost in light of what Vincent talked about at the last meeting, where we could delve into this. Maybe have one meeting with those who are interested in the Safety Action Plan overall before it's brought before the full Commission. I will ask in a few days for volunteers who are interested in joining virtually over the next few weeks to discuss this before the January 25th meeting.

Scott Bricker thanked Domenic, Andy and Josh and the whole team. I'm very impressed with the process. I had questions and comments for them during this process and they answered responsively.

Dom thanked Scott for being a part of the process and reviewing the Plan.

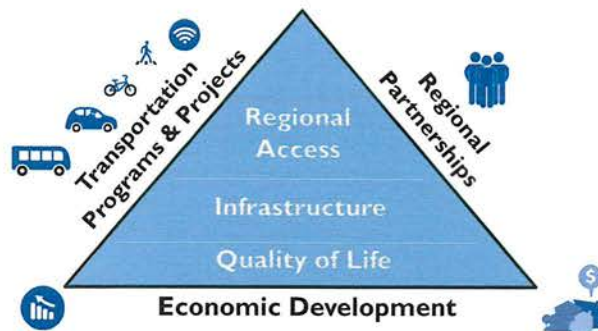
9. Message from the Executive Director – Vincent Valdes  
Next Meeting Date – **January 25, 2021**

Mr. Valdes shared a few things with the Commission, one being what the Chairman spoke of, that we are moving in the direction of reestablishing the Regional Policy Advisory Committee. It has not met in over a year and half. With so many emerging topics coming our way; broadband, economic development, post COVID recovery, emerging technologies, new partnerships, bringing in private partners. We really need the forum to discuss those robust discussions amongst ourselves, so that we can start thinking about building our priorities. Creating a space where we are moving all our priorities together. Whether it's rural, urban, or suburban, that we're working together to really have a clear voice and vision of how we're going to do this work. Earlier, we had a conversation about different trends that are emerging from Washington DC in terms of potential funding and discretionary programs, and it's important that we have that venue to express our needs at a national and a state level as well as a local level. So stay tuned for that. We will be soliciting ideas that we can present to the Executive Committee and the SPC Board over time so we can explore all of these topics.

This next slide is an area where I have been spending a lot of time since coming on board, and I want to thank the Chairman for giving me the opportunity to do this. I did brief the Executive Committee and the SPC Board about this. I'm excited to speak to the full Commission about an effort we will be launching in the coming year. It's really a comprehensive organizational assessment or review of the SPC itself. We will be recruiting a contactor to help us rethink and reinvent how SPC conducts its business from top to bottom.

## SPC Strategic Function

**Purpose:** To support equitable, sustainable, livable communities in Southwestern Pennsylvania through planning, economic development initiatives, and projects that benefit the region.



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I can't over emphasize this effort, with so many emerging topics, so many new things coming down the pike we need to think of how we optimize our systems and functions and business lines here at SPC, so we can bring our influence of what our span is as shown in this slide. Within the triangle we can influence, regional access, we're responsible for improving infrastructure and ultimately for the quality of life around the region. Around the perimeter of the triangle you see the levers we can pull; we work with transportation projects and programs; to include broadband. I'm increasingly asking people to include broadband as another transportation mode. Improving our regional partnerships,



creating a space here where all voices are heard. Taking input from all quarters since this is a broad and diverse region; influencing economic development everything that we do has an economic lens as well as an equity and access lens which is very important to keep in mind.

The next slide is a statement that details a statement of work, for how SPC approaches its work as an organization.

## SPC – Organizational Underlying Principles

1. Complex problems require an *interdisciplinary approach*.
2. We solve challenges *holistically* and take advantage of every opportunity.
3. Solutions are *practical and actionable*.
4. We begin by *defining our desired outcomes*.
5. We work to *ensure the success of our colleagues and partners*.

1. The first principal is that this is an interdisciplinary approach that we are trying solve our challenges from a planning and engineering perspective, but we're not missing the boat on social services, education, academia, the private sector and other disciplines that are important to how we come to our solutions.
2. We look at the second principal holistically we take advantage of every opportunity presented to us. And that we are integrating all of those skills.
3. Everything we do is optional, practical and of benefit. Everything leads to a benefit or some stakeholder.
4. We are working to define our communal desired outcome from the word go. We know the end game we know what we want and we guide our actions to get those results.
5. We ensure the success of everyone in the region. We don't cannibalize ourselves where one part of the region benefits and another part doesn't. That we're all in this together is super important.

This last slide represents the document I mentioned earlier which is a boil down which lays down the strategy activities for the reinvention of SPC. Talking about the activities and deliverables that we're interested in developing--putting together a practical business plan for evolving the SPC. Changing a culture within an organization is not easy, changing a perspective on how we do our work when we've been doing it a certain way for years. I've learned over my career that change is frightening, but necessary to be able to move the ball forward and stay up with the emerging trends.

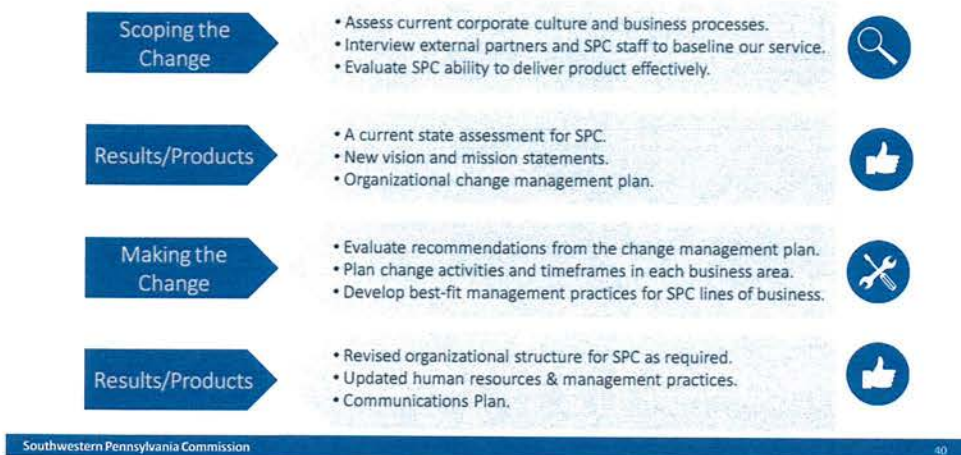
The next thing is creating these recommendations that will provide us with a management plan for reinventing SPC. Simple, practical, steps that will get us to where we need to get in defined timeframes, in each of the business areas and perhaps new business areas, such as broadband or a cognitively directory. Here at the SPC is an important topic and one which is not going away.

At the end of the day a revised organizational structure for SPC. I'm happy to be working with my Directors here, who are wonderful people. Is there room to perhaps create new offices or efforts to create new tools for managing staff and our practices in terms of how we deliver our service?

Finally, how do we communicate what we do? How do we interact with our stakeholders, our customers, our clients, and our partners and; creating an approach, a plan that will take us in that direction over time.

I'm looking forward to kicking this off at the beginning of the New Year. We are going to put out a solicitation for that change management support. I'm excited to be working with all of you over time to see how we can improve these processes.

### SPC – Evolution Strategy Activities and Deliverables



Chairman Fitzgerald said again we will want to form a subcommittee to have more robust discussions about Mr. Valdes' new strategies for SPC.

Scott Bricker asked if we are looking at other MPOs or RPOs as models in some way? Mr. Valdes responded that yes he has looked at other MPOs. Actually, before coming to SPC one of my jobs was to certify MPOs. So I learned a lot about MPO best practices. I've talked to some of my colleagues around the county as to what they've done for their MPOs as a sort of new direction. We all know what a TIP is because SPC does that very well and has been recognized by the FHWA and FTA for best practices. Wouldn't it be great to take that model or those experiences and develop what I call a BIP, a broadband improvement program? Where we're creating a space to get local projects all together to figure out what will be the most benefit to the region, so we can articulate a single voice to Washington DC or whoever the funder may be, when it comes time to implement broadband. So we have one voice, a unified approach. I think taking the TIP process and transferring it to a BIP process is going to be beneficial in that regard. Why not have the southwestern Pennsylvania region be the first one out of the block to do that nationally. I would also love that to become a best practice nationally, that was even adopted in statue.

Kim Geyer asked do you have a time line for this process--3 or 5 years? Mr. Valdes replied when you go through an organizational assessment it can take up to 6 months to put the plan together and another 6 months to implement. After that it could be in effect as long as it's valuable.

10. Other SPC Business – Rich Fitzgerald

Commented on the COVID-19 vaccination distribution which has started in our hospitals. None of our counties have been immune from this. Hopefully the vaccine distribution will go quickly, that is one of the things I hopefully will be good collaborating to get to our counties help so we can get back to normal. For myself I have missed being in the official meetings, and with the camaraderie. That doesn't happen so well meeting virtually.

11. Appointment of 2021 Nominating Committee – Rich Fitzgerald

Chairman Fitzgerald is taking recommendations for people who might want to serve on this committee next year.

12. Adjourn

Commissioner Maggi moved to adjourn the meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and Commissioner Osche seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted

Pat Fabian  
Secretary-Treasurer