

**Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)
Meeting Minutes via Webex
April 15, 2021, 10:00 a.m.**

Two Chatham Center • Suite 500 • 112 Washington Place • Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Attendees:

- Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
- Stephen Shanley, Allegheny County Department of Public Works
- Darin Alviano, Armstrong County Planning Commission
- Joe West, Beaver County Planning Commission
- Joel MacKay, Butler County Planning Commission
- Mark Gordon, Butler County Planning Commission
- Arthur Cappella, Fayette County Zoning, Planning and Community Development
- Jeremy L. Kelly, Greene County Planning and Community Development
- Josh Krug, Indiana County Office of Planning and Development
- Amy McKinney, Lawrence County Planning Commission
- Jeffrey W. Leithauser, Washington County Planning Commission
- Daniel Carpenter, Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
- Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office
- Jeff Skalican, City of Pittsburgh
- Austin McDaniel, Greene County Planning and Community Development
- Jason Theakston, Washington County Planning Commission
- Jennifer Crobak, FHWA
- Brandon Leach, PennDOT
- Matthew Crea, PennDOT
- Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Association
- Kathryn Schlesinger, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
- Chris Watts, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
- Mavis Rainey, Oakland Transportation Management Association
- Harold Swan, PennDOT District 10-0
- Brian Allen, PennDOT District 10-0
- Eric Buchan, PennDOT District 10-0
- Rob Miskanic, PennDOT District 11-0
- John Quatman, PennDOT District 11-0
- Dina Salemi, PennDOT District 11-0
- Doug Seeley, PennDOT District 11-0
- Stephanie Spang, PennDOT District 11-0
- Evan Tobin, PennDOT District 11-0
- Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, PennDOT District 11-0
- Angela Saunders, PennDOT District 12-0
- Rachel Duda, PennDOT District 12-0
- Bill Kovach, PennDOT District 12-0
- Josh Theakston, PennDOT District 12-0
- Lucina Beattie, Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail
- Dan Laird, Hill International
- Andy Waple, SPC Transportation Director
- Ryan Gordon, SPC Staff
- Domenic D'Andrea, SPC Staff
- Chuck Imbrogno, SPC Staff
- Tom Klevan, SPC Staff
- Dave Totten, SPC Staff

Attendance cont'd on next page:

Attendance cont'd:

Lillian Gabreski, SPC Staff
Greg Shermeto, SPC Staff
Erika Eagan, SPC Staff
Josh Spano, SPC Staff
Dan Bernazzoli, SPC Staff

- **Indicates TTC voting member**

1. **Call to Order**

Andy Waple called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. with a roll call for the TTC members.

2. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

3. **Action on March 18th TTC Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Joe West and seconded by Mark Gordon to approve the minutes of the March TTC minutes as presented. The TTC approved.

4. **FHWA/PennDOT Central Office, Program Center Report from Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office and Jennifer Crobak, FHWA**

Kevin McCullough began the report by discussing the Federal COVID relief bill, which was passed in December and is only for relief of lost revenue due to COVID, and are for projects which are already in the pipeline for delivery, not for additional projects. Kevin then discussed the CY 2021 letting program, in which PennDOT is looking to advance \$1.9 Billion for the annual letting program. PennDOT will be monitoring anticipated cash flow of existing projects, as well as projected lettings in advance of every letting. Kevin moved onto updates to the PennDOT pathways initiative, which began in November of 2020. Information and videos explaining potential funding options and the ongoing planning and environmental linkages study are still available on PennDOT's website. PennDOT will continue to analyze potential funding options, including the major bridges P3 initiative. With the approval of the major bridges P3 initiative in November of 2020, initial candidates were submitted for bridges in need of replacement or rehabilitation and to use tolls to fund them. On February 18, 2021, PennDOT issued a press release announcing the initial candidate bridges for the initiative. As the initiatives move forward, updates and engagement opportunities will be shared with the TTC, and public comment on the candidate bridges is anticipated to be launched by the end of April.

Kevin spoke next on the Transportation Revenue Options Commission, or TROC, which is a task force designed for developing a comprehensive, strategic proposal for addressing the transportation funding needs for Pennsylvania's aging transportation infrastructure and for the phasing out of Pennsylvania's gas tax. The final report of recommendations is due on August 1, 2021, and the commission is comprised of transportation, economic, and community stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including majority and minority leaders from the House and Senate Transportation and Appropriations committees, as well as representation from MPOs and RPOs. The commission held its first meeting on March 25, 2021 and will hold two meetings a month through July. The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2021. Kevin also spoke about the 2023 TIP Program update, with the procedural and general guidance workgroup holding their kickoff meeting on March 23rd, and also meeting on April 13th. Draft guidance should be

available by late June. Also, a Transportation survey was released on April 1st, and will be available to April 14th for feedback on the 12-year program, STIP, regional TIPs and Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan. The financial guidance workgroup for the TIP held its kickoff meeting on April 6th, and more information will be provided by Ryan Gordon later in the meeting.

Jennifer Crobak then discussed a new USDOT discretionary grant program, which will be replacing the former TIGER grant program. It has been renamed as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant program, or RAISE grant program. There will be up to \$1 Billion for this program in 2021 and projects will be evaluated based on criteria that includes safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, and innovation. Projects will then be prioritized that can demonstrate improvements to racial equality, reducing climate change, and creating new good paying jobs. USDOT is providing a series of webinars which will provide more information. Applications are due by July 12th. Jennifer went on to discuss the SPC Transportation Management Area certification review, which looks at the planning process throughout the region by the MPO staff, transit providers, and the PennDOT districts and Central Office. FHWA will be looking at how the planning process is carried out in the region, and is required to review and certify the process every 4 years. The first step of that process will be a desk review to work with the staff to review the different planning products that have been completed. Next will be a virtual discussion to dig into details on those products, as well as a public input opportunity. Lastly, FHWA will prepare a report on the findings of the planning process, and will highlight any areas for improvements as well. Current dates for the review are scheduled for July 14-15, which will coincide with the combined TOC-TCC meetings and should bring all stakeholders into the discussion.

Arthur Cappella asked a question to Kevin about the gas tax, wondering if he has heard anything about the elimination of the gas tax. Kevin McCullough answered by mentioning the Governor would like to eliminate the tax, and although we are not at a point where we can eliminate it at this point, it is a goal to get away from the tax. A reduction of the gas taxes may be coming sooner than later, but no increases are expected. TROC will be hoping to look at new technology to help with new revenue streams, and will be looking for ways to help with any shortfalls. \$140 Billion has been shorted on the national level, which was transferred from the general fund to the highway trust fund. COVID impacts to Pennsylvania revenue is estimated around \$500+ million, but cash is starting to come back in as travel increases once again. Kevin mentioned that more updates will be coming in about that soon. Joe West asked a question about the locations and structure of the P3 bridges, and wondered about the use of tolling for revenue on these bridges. Kevin McCullough answered about the bridges, mentioning that the 9 bridges will be significant in the future, looking to bring in over \$2 billion in revenue in Pennsylvania. The bridges are still not approved, and may not be in the end, but since the 9 bridges will cost around \$2 billion, the issue of how to pay for them is an issue since we do not have the revenue in the current program unless a large federal bill is passed or if something is found in the TROC discussions. Andy Waple mentioned the one bridge location located in the SPC region is in Bridgeville, with another one of the bridges located in District 10, but not in the SPC region (in Jefferson County).

5. **Action on Modifications to the 2021-2024 TIP**

A. PennDOT District 10-0

There were no modifications for PennDOT District 10-0 this month.

B. PennDOT District 11-0

Rob Miskanic went over the four amendments and three administrative actions for PennDOT District 11-0 that needed TTC approval. The first amendment was for a highway reconstruction project, consisting of widening, adding turn lanes, implementing pedestrian and bike connections, and improving intersections, located on Market Place Blvd, (Old Kmart site) including the intersection at Montour Run Road in Moon Township, Allegheny County. The district requests the addition of a planning and engineering phase, a final design phase, a utilities phase, a right-of-way phase and a construction phase to the TIP, utilizing 100% local funds. The second amendment was for a deck replacement on SR 910, Gibsonia Road over Deer Creek in West Deer Township. The district requests the addition of \$2,500 under planning and engineering to cover accrued unbilled costs. The third amendment was for a park and ride expansion – construction of additional 200 spaces in a structure to the existing 480 spaces and install an enhanced shelter at the Ross Park n Ride Expansion in Ross Township, Allegheny County. The district requests the addition of funding on the construction phase, and to add CMAQ funds to cover costs of lower lot paving owned by PennDOT. The fourth amendment was for widening for turning lanes, and signal upgrades, located on SR 2031, along Lincoln Way business district in White Oak Borough, Allegheny County. The district requests the addition of a final design phase to cover ongoing environmental mitigation, with the source of funds being deobligated from the right-of-way phase on the same project.

The first administrative action was for an emergency bridge rehabilitation located on SR 4012 over I-376 in Neshannock Township, Lawrence County. On Thursday, April 1, 2021 the bridge was struck by an over height truck causing damage to the fascia girder and interior beams in Span 2. Inspectors determined the most serious of this damage was longitudinal cracking along the fascia beam which reflected through the web and essentially separated the web from the top flange of the beam. This rendered the fascia beam ineffective at carrying live load. The shoulder above the fascia beam has been closed to traffic. The District is requesting approval to utilize Emergency Procurement Procedures for the replacement of the superstructure at Span 2 for the Mitchell Road Bridge. The district requests the addition of a construction phase for emergency remedial action and contract work on damaged structure. Emergency procurement request was approved 4/7/2021 and will be sourced as 100% state A-185 funds. The second administrative action was for a superstructure replacement on the bridge that carries Campbells Run Road over Campbells Run and is located .7 miles west of the underpass to I-79 in Robinson Township, Allegheny County. The district requests the addition of funds to the right-of-way phase. The third administrative action was for a bridge preservation project, located on SR 1038 over Allegheny River in East Deer Township, Allegheny County. The district requests the addition of right-of-way and utility phases for expected expenditures.

Ann Ogoreuc made a motion to approve the amendments and administrative actions from PennDOT District 11-0, which was seconded by Joe West. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. PennDOT District 12-0

Angela Saunders went over one administrative action for PennDOT District 12-0. The first administrative action was for a bridge replacement/rehabilitation of structure carrying T-476 over Buffalo Creek (Steel Bridge) on Walker Hill Road, Blaine Township, Washington County. The district requests the addition of \$900,000 in local funds for FY 2020, which will utilize ACT 13/89 funding.

D. Transit TIP Amendment Summary

Tom Klevan went over the three amendments from the Transit Operations Committee meeting. The first amendment was for CMAQ funds to be added to a Port Authority park and ride project from District 11-0, the same project which was mentioned in District 11-0 by Rob Miskanic. The second amendment was from Butler Transit Authority for \$800,000 of 5307 formula funding and matches from the state capital program and local funds for a total of around \$1 million to advance the multimodal center in downtown Butler and make improvements to the parking. The third amendment was an emergency amendment from the Beaver County Transit Authority, which was for HVAC improvements at the Beaver County transit center which will be around \$500,000.

6. 2023 TIP Update

Ryan Gordon spoke on the 2023 TIP Update, beginning with the financial guidance and statewide general and procedural guidance workgroups underway. The SPC Pre-TIP comment period has concluded, and the output of those comments will be incorporated in to the process at the second work group, which is upcoming. Next task will be candidate project development within the region, and SPC will be providing several resources to assist with that. The SharePoint site will be active by the next TTC meeting, which will store all information and materials regarding the TIP update. Ryan will also be reaching out to District Executive staff to begin scheduling some work groups. The first work group meeting is scheduled for July 2021, with additional meetings held in August and September.

Ryan then discussed the updated TIP procedural flow, which has been drafted and was included in the TTC package. SPC is looking for any feedback on the draft procedural flow, and Ryan may set up a conference call with key work group members in order to discuss the draft. For candidate project review and development, SPC will provide current LRTP and TYP lists for each District group members, and SPC will provide the updated 2021 TIP Candidate List for discussion. Ryan discussed some of the deferred projects from the previous TIP, and mentioned that he would be providing a spreadsheet of these projects with their updated status to the TIP work groups in order to assist with project candidates. Candidate projects will be submitted via the 2023 candidate template, in which there are 4 separate templates, split based on bridge projects, roadway projects, safety and operations projects, and new capacity projects. Air Quality, active and community candidate projects will come through separate competitive processes for the CMAQ, TA and Smart programs. Project candidates also need to have consistency with the SPC Long Range Plan (LRP). The anticipated deadline for candidate projects will be on June 23, 2021, but may change based on the first group meeting.

Ryan then went over the candidate template for the projects, mentioning it is very similar to 2021 TIP template. The candidate template is looking for project need and purpose, candidate project title, county, municipality, road name and geographic location, cost estimates and investment category. If anyone does not know any of this information, SPC can provide help with finding information. Candidate projects will also have to have consistency with the SPC long range plan, Ryan provided a template for the SPC LRP, which gave strategies regarding to performance measures, LRP Strategy Connected Mobility, LRP Strategy Global Economy, and LRP Strategy Resilient Communities, and made a note that candidate projects must check off at least 2 or 3 of these strategies to be considered for the TIP. Ryan mentioned again that next steps will be to send out the candidate resources and the 2023 Candidate template early next week, and SPC staff will work on TIP work group draft meeting outlines and set up the SharePoint site for use in the 2023 update. SPC staff will participate in statewide guidance development and will reach out to District executive staff to schedule TIP work group meetings. More information will be discussed during the next TTC meeting.

7. Federal Member Designated Project Earmark Submissions

Andy Waple gave an update on the SPC Region member designated project candidate lists for congressional earmarks. All the projects have been submitted over the past few weeks, and Andy has attached a list of the final projects out to all of the TTC members. Ryan Gordon and Andy Waple thanked everyone for providing information on these projects in a tight window, and for their input of project submissions. The projects are due to the committee heads on April 23rd, however all the projects have been submitted as of last week. Meetings with each congressman and county commissioners will begin in the next few weeks. Joe West asked if this is going to be a yearly occurrence, or will it just be a one-time thing. Andy Waple responded that we currently do not know, but it was tied to the reauthorization bill in Congress as a way to bring everyone to the table, but not much is known after that.

8. Southwestern Pennsylvania Connected – Regional Connectivity Improvement Program

Andy Waple discussed the work currently being undertaken regarding the regional connectivity improvement program, regarding regional broadband. Work began on this program back in the development of the Long Range Plan with discussions that almost all of our counties have an issue with high speed internet services, especially the rural counties. SPC began to develop a scope of work in collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and a nonprofit called Allies for Children, and have worked for the past three months on shopping this scope to some of the other Pittsburgh foundations and secured a good amount of funds to undertake a regional broadband strategy and implementation program. Andy then gave an overview of the program, which will deploy highspeed connectivity projects across the region and will be a catalyst in proactively assisting the region to collect, develop, and prioritize a pipeline of connectivity projects and initiatives in order to secure funding for implementation. COVID-19 has demonstrated to the world the importance of connectivity currently and will continue to play in every aspect of our lives. For southwestern Pennsylvania region to be globally competitive, the underserved areas of the region must be addressed equitably.

The first phase of the connectivity implementation program will be to convene a broad coalition of stakeholders to guide development of process, develop a data-driven approach to equitably and systematically address unserved and underserved areas of the region, pursue funding for high-speed connectivity programs and projects, recommend a governance structure to assist the region with implementing the program in the future, and work in partnership with Carnegie Mellon, Allies for Children, and a broad coalition of stakeholders. This will include an existing conditions analysis, which is underway, and to develop a connectivity index and connectivity opportunity areas, which is also beginning. Next steps include public and stakeholder engagement, creating goals and strategies and measures of effectiveness. Later steps will include a project implementation roadmap, which includes deployment technologies, potential hurdles, location of opportunity areas, potential partners, opinion of cost per deployment, and job creation opportunities, with recommendations for a future program governance structure.

The schedule for first phase tasks will take place between March of 2021 and be finished by late December of 2021. In 2022, second phase of the program, support and implementation, will commence. This starts with requests of qualification from engineering firms to support implementation of high priority connectivity projects from SWPA. This will include data collection and analysis, public engagement and stakeholder collaboration, legislative support and policy guidance, grant writing and innovating funding mechanisms, and project mobilization and implementation support. This will lead to streamline procurement and implementation processes in the future. With \$7 billion in federal funding available in broadband funding as of December 2020, and \$2000-300 billion available for the states from the American Rescue Plan (March 2021), there will be a tremendous amount of financial resources available to help with this program.

9. **Other Business/Status Reports**

There was no other business or status reports to update.

10. **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Jeremy Kelly. The motion was passed unanimously and Andy Waple called for the adjournment of the meeting at 11:33 am.