



## SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION

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### MINUTES TRANSIT OPERATORS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: September 8, 2021  
Location: **Meeting was held by online video/teleconference**

Attendance:

Members: Sheila Gombita, WASH (Chairperson)  
David Wohlwill, PAAC  
Anthony Hickton, CommuteInfo  
Ashley Seman, MMVTA  
Alan Blahovec, WCTA  
Lynn Manion, ACTA  
Kathryn Schlesinger, PDP  
David Richards, NCATA  
Mavis Rainey, OTMA  
John Paul, BTA

Guests/Staff: Nancy Basile, MMVTA  
Ann Ogoreuc, ACED  
Sam Plocinski, PennDOT  
Lucinda Beattie, WPPR  
Tim Turner, Steel Valley Rapid Transit Auth.  
Vanessa Lovlie, ACTS  
Amber Davis, BART

SPC Staff: Tom Klevan  
Kathy Stefani  
Ronda Craig  
Chuck Imbrogno  
Erika Eagen  
Stephanie Kambic  
David Totten

This meeting of the TOC was called to order at 10:00 A.M.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

2. **Public Comment –**

- a. *There was no public comment.*

3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for previous Transit Operators Committee meetings**

- *The Committee approved the minutes for the July 15, 2021 Joint TOC-TTC meeting on a motion by David Richards and a second by Ashley Seman.*

4. **Amendments and Administrative Actions to the FFY2019-2022 TIP**

- *Allied Coordinated Transportation Services (ACTS) requested an administrative adjustment to the FFY2021-2024 TIP to add the project “ADA Accessible Ramp and Parking” (MPMS# 116634) to construct an ADA-compliant parking pad with \$149,845 in state funding in FFY 2022.. **TOTAL CHANGE: \$149,845***
  - ***Action:** This action was unanimously approved and the appropriate changes were made to the region’s FFY2021-2024 TIP by the TOC on a motion by John Paul and a second by David Richards. Staff will transmit this project information to the PennDOT Program Center within one week of this action.*
- *Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation (FACT) requested two amendments to the FFY2021-2024 TIP: to add the project “Computer Upgrades” (MPMS# 116635) to purchase computer upgrades including server, desktop and laptop computers, with \$115,907 in federal CRRSAA funding in FFY 2022; AND adding the project “Maintenance Equipment” (MPMS# 116636) to make needed equipment upgrades with \$80,000 in federal 5307, \$16,000 in other state and \$4,000 in local funding in FFY 2022. **TOTAL CHANGE: \$215,907***
  - ***Action:** These actions were unanimously approved and the appropriate changes were made to the region’s FFY2021-2024 TIP by the TOC on a motion by Alan Blahovec and a second by David Wohlwill. Staff will transmit this project information to the PennDOT Program Center within one week of this action.*
- *Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) requested an amendment to the FFY2021-2024 TIP to add the project “Station Square Station Improvements” (MPMS# 116637) to construct improvements to the Station Square light rail station, using \$4,000,000 in federal 5337, \$967,750 in state capital bond and \$32,750 in local funding in FFY2022. **TOTAL CHANGE: \$5,000,500***
  - ***Action:** This action was unanimously approved and the appropriate changes were made to the region’s FFY2021-2024 TIP by the TOC on a motion by Alan Blahovec and a second by David Richards. Staff will transmit this project information to the PennDOT Program Center within one week of this action.*

*There were no TIP adjustments requested.*

5. **FTA/PennDOT Updates**

- PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation representatives reported that the Bureau is currently working on getting capital grants out.
- SPC staff reported that action by FTA on CRRSAA grants are expected soon.

6. **Transit Participant Updates**

- NCATA—David Richards reported that NCATA had kicked off a transit development plan project, working together with SPC.
- BTA—John Paul reported that BTA’s park-and-ride project is now two-thirds done. Enhancements including a waiting area, driver training room, and a stormwater facility are expected to be complete by the end of the year.

- WASH—Sheila Gombita reported on Freedom Transit’s project to improve bus shelters and add wi-fi to buses.

*There were no other meeting participant updates.*

## **7. Driver Labor Shortage**

- TOC members shared stories and information about the ongoing labor shortage in the transit industry.
  - WCTA is down from a high of 60 full time employees to 30. Meanwhile, demand for shared ride trips has increased sharply and trips are now limited to 500 essential medical trips per day. Wages were increased to \$15.00/hour with a bonus and a referral bonuys, but applications have dried up.
  - WASH reported that they have not had to cut service, but that step is coming soon. A maintenance backlog could result in the loss of buses.
  - NCATA is also short of mechanics.
  - MMVTA has lowered its age requirement for driving fixed-route buses.
  - Sheila Gombita said that CCTA is sponsoring on a webinar on how to hire people who have recently been incarcerated, but it is not clear if they could pass background check requirements.
  - Alan Blahovec noted that although shared ride operating is a hard job, the funding structure limits agency’s ability to raise those wages.

## **8. Port Authority of Allegheny County: NEXTransit Plan Update**

- Port Authority staff reviewed the project list for the recently approved NEXTransit long range plan. Details of the plan are available at the agency’s website. The first project on the list, “project zero,” is to conduct a facility master plan with the aim of acquiring a new garage that will allow for service to expand, especially using alternative/electric fuels. The top ten projects are:
  - South Hills-Strip District service
  - Downtown transit center
  - Library Line study
  - Homestead-McKeesport “61C”/SR837 corridor
  - East Busway phased extension
  - Allentown light rail study and/or strip district study
  - I-376 East Busway extension
  - McKnight Rd (Ross to McCandless) corridor
  - Allegheny Valley transit
  - Airport rapid connection
- Some of the policies proposed in the plan include:
  - Sidewalk and bus stop improvement
  - Fare policy
  - ADA improvements for light rail stations
  - Bus network redesign
  - Signage/wayfinding/branding
  - Affordable housing
  - Electric vehicles
  - Other technology
  - Vehicle designs
  - Active parking management.

## **9. SPC Staff Updates**

- The next SPC Operations and Safety Forum is set for September 9.

- The SPC Active Transportation Forum was held September 7. The event included discussion of the regional train network
- The CommuteInfo annual Commuter Challenge is set to run from 10/18-24.

## **10. Other Business**

- *The next meeting of the TOC is scheduled for 10 a.m. **Wednesday, December 8, 2021.** Participation details will be made available at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)*

***Action:** The meeting was adjourned on a motion by John Paul and a second by Alan Blahovec.*