

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Full Commission | Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025
4 p.m.
The Terminal
42 21st Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

The one hundred and seventy-second meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Pat Fabian.

Members: Brian Allen, Darin Alviano, Mike Baker, Brad Berlin, Kevin Boozel, Scott Bricker, Douglas Chew, Mark Critz, Rachel Duda, Bonni Dunlap, Jared Edgreen, Pat Fabian, Kim Geyer, Sheila Gombita, Mark Gordon, Kelly Gray, Bob Griffin, Dan Grzybek, Sherene Hess, Mark Hillard, Sara Innamorato, Charles Jones, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Jeremy Kelly, Dan Kennedy, Brandon Leach, Bob Lesnick Dave Lohr, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Betsy McClure, Amy McKinney, Don Myers, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Bob Regola, Chris Sainato, Chris Sandvig, Byron Stauffer, John Strate, John Timney, Vince Vicites, Barb Warwick, Jason Zang, and Blair Zimmerman.

Others: Jason Rigone, Westmoreland County Department of Economic Development; Josh Spano, Westmoreland County Planning Department; Lisa Frank, Mayor Gainey's Office; Kyle Chintalapalli, Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority; Chuck Kolling, Pam Snyder, and Carol DelRosso; Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney; and Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith LLP

Staff: Bel Ayele, Kristin Baum, Mary Brangan, Kirk Brethauer, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Tiffany Cummings, Julia Ferri, Rich Fitzgerald, Lillie Gabreski, Ryan Gordon, Anthony Hickton, Mark Hoblitzell, Chuck Imbrogno, Jenn Lasser, Jen Liptak, Nick Mannone, Cort McCombs, Jeremy Papay, DJ Ryan, Mason Secreti, Evan Schoss, Ailisa Sobien, and Devon White.

1. Chairman Fabian called to order the February 24, 2025 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.
 - a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded.
 - b. Any Conflict of Interest Declaration on Action Items – None
2. Action on Minutes of the December 16, 2024 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 16th meeting by Commissioner Vicities which was seconded by Commissioner Sainato. The motion was unanimous.

Note for Minutes: In accordance with Section 13.12 of the By-laws, an email vote on Resolution 01-25 was approved on January 24, 2025.

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ("SPC") to approve adoption of the updated Title VI Compliance Plan to keep SPC in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other nondiscrimination mandates.

WHEREAS, The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), as a recipient; sub-recipient; and, pass-through entity of federal financial assistance to certified sub-recipients is required to comply with all federal Civil Rights and Anti-Discrimination laws, including Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (EJ), and Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency (LEP); and

WHEREAS, this plan is intended to meet the requirements set forth by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure nondiscrimination under Title VI and the aforementioned other federal statutes in federally funded activities; and

WHEREAS, the plan also provides an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Environmental Justice (EJ) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) concepts, definitions and associated nondiscrimination acts, and how these are incorporated into the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves adoption of the Title VI Compliance Plan.

A Resolution to adopt of the updated Title VI Compliance Plan to keep SPC in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other nondiscrimination mandates, was conducted from January 17th – January 24th, 2025. A majority vote of the Commission was received with final approval of Resolution 01-25 confirmed on January 24, 2025.

3. Public Comment – None.

4. Executive Director’s Report – Rich Fitzgerald, Executive Director

Mr. Fitzgerald highlighted the NFL Draft's impact on Pittsburgh, with 500,000 attendees expected. He emphasized the need for coordination with local transit agencies and shuttles due to the expected influx of people for the NFL Draft. Encourages local businesses to participate and get listed for vendor opportunities.

On February 17th, The Joe James award was given to Chris Blackwell, Director of Planning for Municipality of Penn Hills for his 30 years of service.

The Pittsburgh trail project is 73% complete, with a grant application in progress. The transportation report included updates on public transit safety plans and human services coordination, emphasizing the need for better public transit options.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated plans are underway for the annual Allegheny Conference meeting in Harrisburg in May.

5. Transportation Report—Lillian Gabreski, Director of Transportation

Ms. Gabreski explained the purpose of the Coordinated Transportation Plan. She stated the Plan is developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public" utilizing transportation services.

The coordinated plan should identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (49 U.S.C. 5310) be "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan."

6. Action Item, 02-25 Resolution to approve and adopt the 2025 update of the “Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan” (CTP)

Mr. White explained that the plan includes a list that represents frequently mentioned needs/gaps/barriers that were gathered from public outreach and also identified evolving demographic shifts and population trends in the region that can be used to adjust service, infrastructure, and resource allocation.

Identified demographic shifts that would seem to indicate increased demand for services include:

- The counties of Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland all have senior populations close to or exceeding 22% of their total population. This is higher than the nationwide average of 17.7%.
 - Since the previous plan there has been an 11.6% increase in the senior demographic overall in the ten-county SPC region. The total population remained near constant, with a total population change of less than half a percent during that time, indicating a regional demographic shift towards older residents. All counties saw similar growth in the 65+ demographic, mostly around 10%, with Butler County experiencing the highest increase of 19.5%.
 - Since the previous plan there was an increase of 17.3% in seniors living below the poverty line.
- Fayette and Greene counties show approximately 20% of the population living with a disability, notably 47.1% higher than the national average.
- Over the next five years the region is expected to see a 38% increase in the number of seniors entering the senior age group.
 - In Fayette County 16.2% of the population is below poverty. Green, Indiana, and Lawrence Counties all have poverty rates around 13%.

Finally, it is critical that the providers and SPC work together to ensure that the prioritized strategies/actions for implementation be financially sustainable with measurable outcomes.

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION (SPC) to approve and adopt the 2025 update of the “Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (CTP).”

WHEREAS, Title 49 U.S.C. 5310 requires that projects funded under the Federal Transit Administration’s Elderly and Disabled Individuals Program (Section 5310), are derived from a locally developed public transit-human services coordinated transportation plan and that the plan is developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human service agencies, as well as members of the public; and,

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has established that the local coordinated plan boundaries correspond to boundaries of the transportation planning organizations across the Commonwealth and, for Southwestern Pennsylvania, SPC is the designated transportation planning organization for the 10-county region made up of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland Counties; and

WHEREAS, SPC’s public outreach during this update of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit–Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan was in compliance with Federal guidance; and,

WHEREAS, the SPC Transit Operators and Transportation Technical Committees have taken action to endorse and recommend for adoption this update of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit–Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan in compliance with Federal guidance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission adopt and approve this 2025 Update of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit–Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 02-25 by Commissioner Osche which was seconded by Commissioner Lohr.

7. Action Item, 03-25 Resolution to approve the submission of the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for the CommuteInfo Regional Vanpool Program

A RESOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to approve the submission of the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for the CommuteInfo Regional Vanpool Program

WHEREAS, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission as a sub-recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula (49 U.S.C., Section 5307) financial assistance to support the CommuteInfo Regional Vanpool Program is required to comply with 49 CFR Part 763 - Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP); and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to 49 CFR, Part 673.11, The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is obligated to draft and certify a PTASP for small urban agencies (less than 100 vehicles operated in maximum service) that did not opt to develop their own plans; and,

WHEREAS, the CommuteInfo Regional Vanpool Program has utilized the PennDOT PTASP template and process intended for small urban transit agencies which fulfills all applicable PTASP regulation requirements; and,

WHEREAS, applicable recipients and States must certify compliance with PTASP regulation requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission hereby approves the submission of the PTASP for the CommuteInfo Regional Vanpool Program dated February 2025.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 03-25 by Commissioner Sandvig which was seconded by Commissioner Junko.

8. PM 1 Safety Measures Update – Evan Schoss, Manager of Operations & Safety Planner

Mr. Schoss stated as part of MAP-21, a federal rule making was established to enact national performance management requirements to make sure that State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) choose the most efficient investments for Federal transportation funds. From the Federal level, we are required to track 20 different performance measures that will have an impact on transportation investments. 5 of those 20 are Safety Performance measures.

Federal metrics are done in five year rolling averages which are used in order to absorb annual anomalies and establish trendlines

Performance requirements to carry out the HSIP Program-Safety Final Rule (5 year rolling average) include:

1. Number of Fatalities (all public roads)
2. Rate of Fatalities (all public roads-per 100 M VMT)
3. Number of Serious Injuries (all public roads)
4. Rate of Serious Injuries (all public roads-per 100 M VMT)
5. Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries (all public roads)

Two options to establish targets

- MPOs can agree to support the State DOT target; OR
- MPOs can establish a numerical target specific to the MPO planning area for each of the 5 measures

PennDOT is asking us to continue to support a 2% annual reduction for fatality goals (no change from last year)

PennDOT is asking us to continue to support a 0% reduction for serious injury goals (no change from last year)

9. Traffic Counting in SPC Region Update -Cort McCombs, Manager of Data Acquisition, GIS and Data Monitoring

Mr. McCombs explained the HPMS Program.:

- Developed in 1978.
- National level highway information system that includes data on the extent, condition, performance, use, and operating characteristics of the Nation's highways.
- Contains administrative and extent of system information on all public roads.
- A nationally unique source of highway system information that is made available to those in the transportation community for highway and transportation planning.

Mr. McCombs stated that support data-driven decision processes within FHWA, the DOT, and the Congress. Data is used in the analysis of highway system condition, performance, and investment needs that make up the biennial Condition and Performance Reports to Congress. Ultimately determines the scope and size of the Federal-aid Highway Program, as well as the level of Federal highway taxation.

- 348 counts assigned By PennDOT annually throughout the entire SPC region.
- Additional counts to support other SPC programs and initiatives as needed.
- March-November - Mon-Thurs Only – No Holidays
- Data collection methods:
 - Machine
 - Manually
 - AI Camera

The Traffic Count season commences March 3rd and ends November 20th. A total of 348 locations.

10. State Budget Update – DJ Ryan, Director of Strategic Initiatives & Policy

Mr. Ryan provided an overview of the Governor's budget proposal, focusing on public transit funding and roads and bridges funding. There was then a discussion on the proposed increase in the state sales tax for transit and the coalition building to advocate for this increase.

- Increase in Transportation Funding (transit, roads, bridges)
- Accelerating the CNI tax rate cuts
- Eliminate Delaware tax loophole
- Creates the new \$50 million PA Innovation Program
- Create the Pennsylvania Regional Economic Competitiveness Challenge
- Increase the Minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Streamlining tax credits for high paying job creation
- Increasing funding for the Marketing to Attract Businesses Program
- \$50 million to restore bad housing stock (replaces Whole Homes Repairs Program)
- \$10 million for first time home buyer grants
- Legalization of recreational marijuana, \$536 million generated
- Skill games legalized and taxed at a 52% rate, \$368 million generated

Mr. Ryan mentioned the shift of funds from the motor license fund to the general fund for roads and bridges construction. Mr. Ryan stated proposed tax changes, including the elimination of certain tax credits and the creation of a new advanced manufacturing tax credit. Legalizing Adult Use Cannabis and Broadband Funding and its potential impact on the State. He also emphasized the importance of broadband funding.

Existing State Programs of Interest to SPC:

- PA SITES: \$400 million over three years; 2024-2035 \$125 million, 2025-2026 \$175 million, 2026-2027 \$100 million. Rolling applications, first group currently being reviewed.
- DCED Multimodal Grants: 2024 awards yet to be announced (next Commonwealth Finance Committee meeting March 18), 2025 application period to open on March 1.

- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD): Application period open.

11. Other Business

An extensive discussion was held on the State Budget, Federally Funded Programs and future planned funding.

12. Reminder on Next Meeting Date – **April 28, 2025**

13. Adjourn – 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy McClure
Secretary-Treasurer