

**The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission**  
**Full Commission | Meeting Minutes**  
**April 27, 2026**  
**4 p.m.**  
**The Terminal**  
**42 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

The one hundred and seventy-ninth meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chair Commissioner Vicites.

**Members:** Aaron Adams, Darin Alviano, Tony Amadio, Mike Baker, Brad Berlin, Kevin Boozel, Tom Ceraso, Douglas Chew, Bonni Dunlap, Scott Dunn, Jared Edgreen, Pat Fabian, Kim Geyer, Sheila Gombita, Mark Gordon, Kelly Gray, Bob Griffin, Dan Grzybek, Sherene Hess, Mark Hillard, Sara Innamorato, Charles Jones, Tom Joyce, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Brandon Leach, Bob Lesnick; Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Betsy McClure, Kristin Mulkerin, Corey O'Connor, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Chris Sainato, Chris Sandvig, Dan Santo, Anthony Shea, Nick Sherman, Laura Sohinki, Byron Stauffer, John Strate, John Timney, Vince Vicites, Barb Warwick, and Jacob Williamson,

**Others:** Jason Rigone, Westmoreland County Department of Economic Development; Chuck Kolling, and Erin Molchany, Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney; Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith LLP.

**Staff:** Cate Aaron, Bel Ayele, Kristin Baum, Mary Brangan, Kirk Brethauer, Melissa Brown, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Mason Fish, Rich Fitzgerald, Lillie Gabreski, Ryan Gordon, Nancy Hirsh, Chuck Imbrogno, Daniel Kukula, Jenn Lasser, Jen Liptak, Jeremy Papay, Faith Pelesky, DJ Ryan, Mason Secreti, Evan Schoss, and Devon White.

1. Commissioner Vicites called to order the April 27, 2026 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 from February 23, 2026, meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of February 23, 2026, meeting by Commissioner McClure which was seconded by Commissioner Dunn. The motion was unanimous.

3. Public Comment - None

4. Executive Directors Report – Rich Fitzgerald, Executive Director

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that he wanted to start off with the data center tour in Loudon County, Virginia. Thanks also to McNees and Allegheny Conference for partnering with us. The County Officials in Loudon County were very helpful, and the tour was great success.

In May SPC will conduct a virtual Long-Range Planning Panel Meeting, and in July will be the last meeting of the Long-Range Plan. A requirement we must do every eight years by statute and good participation is very important.

Now the NFL recap. Everybody in this room should be so proud. The region came together and made the draft a huge success. Also, the fact that Pittsburgh set the record. The only place, the only city franchise that's gone over 800,000 fans, breaking the record of Detroit of a couple years ago that was like 750,000 fans. But more importantly, it seemed to go off without any issues with respect to public safety, and with respect to transportation. Our transit agencies depend on public safety, all the agencies, your transit agencies working with PRT really shined. I want to give a special shoutout to our organization and Devon White, SPC Transit Manager. All the 10-counties as well as the City

of Pittsburgh. Thank you too all.

Our 2027-2030 TIP is underway. There is a survey out now and public TIP meeting will be starting soon. Please participate if you can. Also, June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> will be a Legislative Breakfast in Harrisburg. Please see DJ if you will be attending.

New state park in Fayette County - Laurel Caverns state park announced last month

#### 5. Strategic Initiatives Report—DJ Ryan, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Ryan gave a Strategic Initiative update on FY 24-25 Annual Report:

TIP Public Meetings beginning

Survey for Long Range Plan is OPEN!

Please share on your social, both personal and official

Register for the next LRP meeting – [spcregion.org/LRP](https://spcregion.org/LRP)

Loudoun County Trip

Thank you to those who attended!

Allegheny County Airport Authority Discussion

Housing Study

Port of Pittsburgh Commission

- Approved next FY budget and revision to strategic plan
- USACE Work Plan released
- Includes \$183M for Montgomery Lock in Beaver County

Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition

- Large SWPA Contingent
- Next meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> in Harrisburg

#### 6. Transportation Planning Update — Lillie Gabreski, Director of Transportation

Ms. Gabreski spoke on the NFL Draft preparation. She stated that the transit team was using Remix Platform – transit team created a map of transit service and Park-n-Rides in the greater Pittsburgh region with direct or high-frequency connections to the 2026 NFL Draft. SPC transit team worked alongside partner organizations to coordinate a comprehensive approach to moving fans safely throughout Pittsburgh and the surrounding region.

Safety team staff attended the AMPO 2026 Planning Tools & Training Symposium in Lexington, KY to present on SPC RSA process. SPC Staff participated in National Highway Cooperative Research Program to revise RSA process to incorporate Safe System Approach. Will serve as tool for state & local practitioners nationwide. National Pike (US 40) between US 119 and Canistra Road in Uniontown, PA used as RSA – NCHRP Pilot (3/18).

Transportation Department Meetings were held:

- Keystone Funding Coalition Meeting (3/17)
- IRISE Transportation Forum (3/19)
- PennDOT District 12 Annual Construction Kick-Off Event (4/1)
- Versailles Ave Viaduct Bridge Project Announcement (4/1)
- Network Appalachia Presentation (4/8)
- Funding Workshop/Grant Seminars:
  - Representative Jill Cooper – Westmoreland County

Ms. Gabreski then stated that the first Expert Panel meeting was held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Steamfitters Event Center in Harmony, PA. Groups split into five focus areas – Transportation, Technology, Land Use/Development, Funding and Socioeconomics. Content will be used to develop survey and prepare for next meeting – where group will start identifying strategies.

#### The Long-Range Plan Timeline:

- **October 2025:** SPC Executive Committee Briefing
- **December 2025:** SPC Commission Briefing
- **March 23, 2026: Expert Resource Panel Meeting 1**
- **April 2026:** Survey 1 Launch
- **May 18, 2026: Expert Resource Panel Meeting 2**
  - **link provided in packet, invitations to go out this week**
- **July 2026: Policy Conference**
- **October – November 2026:** Fall Public Meetings and Survey 2
- **April - May 2027:** Spring Public Meetings
- **June 2027:** Long Range Plan Adoption

#### Regional Trail Development Capacity and Needs & Assessment – Leann Chaney, Senior Active Transportation Planner

##### Ms. Chaney spoke on the Regional Trail Development Capacity and Needs:

- Identify trail development challenges, capacity, and needs
- Explore potential creation of a regional support structure
- Steering Advisory Group
- Focus Groups
- State Agencies  
(PennDOT, DCNR, DCED)
- County Staff  
(Planners, Parks & Recreation, Conservation Districts)
- Regional/National Trail Organizations  
(e.x., Rails to Trails Conservancy, Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy, North Country Trail Association)
- Local Trail Organizations  
(e.x., Montour Trail Council, Steel Valley Trail Council, Sheepskin Trail)
- Individual Meetings  
(Adam Mattis, DCNR, Trish Meek, PennDOT)

##### Identified Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities:

- Administrative Challenges
  - Coordination and availability of exiting staff and volunteers
  - Recruitment and retention of new volunteers
  - Costs of studies, engineering, and design
- Trail Development Challenges
  - Lack of available funding
  - Grant management (reporting and administrative requirements)
  - Property acquisition
  - Railroad right-of-way
  - Trail crossings

##### Proposed Study Outcomes:

- Create a Regional Trail Coordinator Position  
SPC is considering reorganizing staff to include someone that could serve as a centralized resource for Southwest PA trail organizations.
- Develop Robust, Centralized Trail Resources  
Feedback indicated that establishing a new trail support organization is not needed.

- Gaps are related to technical assistance, coordination with state agencies, and connections to existing resources.

7. Workforce and Economic Development Report– Jennifer Lasser, Director of Workforce and Economic Development

Ms. Lasser gave an update on Workforce Development:

- Water Resource Center
  - Chartiers Creek
- PREP/Engage
  - Loans - Welly Loan Closing
  - Export – Food Show Meeting
  - Gov. Contracting - Contracts
- Grant Season
  - ARC and EDA
    - POWER
    - Getting the Grant
    - INSPIRE
- DCED PREP/Engage (Q4)
  - Contracts Out to Partners
- EDA Planning
  - CEDS Process/LRP
- Rural Health Care Transformation Funding
- Grants Submitted:
  - EDA Partner Planning
  - ARC Administration
- Grants in Draft:
  - ARISE

Team Activities:

- Rural Health Care Transformation Funding
- Data Center Tours - Sterling, VA
- Community Foundation – Washington PA
- Grant Seminar – Rep Shaffer
- Fayette County Economic Development Vision & Action Plan Meeting
- DCED Visit to Pittsburgh Promise
- Appalachian Leadership Institute - Abingdon VA
- LDD Meeting Harrisburg, PA
- NEOCITY - Kissimmee, Florida
- NADO/DDAA – Washington DC
- Urban Agriculture Webinar
- April 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2026
- Kissimmee Florida (NEOCITY)
- BBBRC Partners & EDA
- SPC attended and spoke on panel spotlighting our workforce success
- Focused on what's next and the remaining months of grant
- Opportunities for future grants and growth
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Build Back Better Update:

- 5 Months Remaining of Contract  
A 60 Day program closeout
- PRIORITY: Spending down remaining dollars
- PRIORITY: Finding follow-on funding for partners
- Thousands Trained & Educated  
Semi-Annual Report due April 30<sup>th</sup>  
Estimated close to 10,000 trained via Community Colleges, WIB,  
University systems  
Working on impact report of equipment
- Robotics & AI Discovery Day – September 16, 2026  
David L. Lawrence Convention Center  
4,500+ attended last year

SPC's International Trade & Export Manager Rena Liu-Belshe has retired after 27 years at SPC. Rena served 1000's of businesses over her tenure at SPC and program managed SPC's international programming including Bringing the World to PA, Fancy Food Show and so much more...

Jackie Pacheco has worked alongside Rena for the last 17 years and has been promoted to the Export Manager role starting April 2026.

8. Other Business

9. Reminder:

)Next LRP Expert Panel Meeting, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Register at <http://www.spcregion.org/LRP>

10. Reminder on the next meeting date

- **Monday, June 22, 2026**