

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

July 31, 2019

9:00 AM

SAP&DC Conference Room

Altoona, PA

ACTION SUMMARY

The following are the major actions taken by the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC) at its regular meeting held on July 31, 2019, at the SAP&DC in Altoona, PA.

1. Approved the May 8, 2019, meeting minutes as presented.
2. Recommended approval of funding the cost increase on the SR 2047 Highway Restoration Project contingent on approval by the PMC.
3. Recommended the RTCC write a letter to ARC supplying the information necessary to secure or apply for funding for an economic impact study.

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MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Rick Suder, Bedford County Planning Commission
- David Thomas, Broad Top Township
- Mary K. Seville, Fulton County Planning Commission
- Gary Decker, Licking Creek Township
- Mark Colussy, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
- Bob Reitman, Huntingdon County Business & Industry
- Stew Neff, Warriors Mark Township
- Rob Rabena, Huntingdon County Rail Authority
- Brad Zearfoss, Somerset County Planning Commission
- Joshua Boland, Somerset County Economic Development Council
- Mike Villeneuve, Somerset County Transportation Services
- Karl King, Rails to Trails of Central PA
- Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
- Vince Greenland, PennDOT District 9-0
- Brandon Carson, SAP&DC
- Brandon Peters, SAP&DC

Others in attendance included:

- Commissioner Barry Dallara, Bedford County
- David Lybarger, PennDOT District 9-0
- Anne Stich, PennDOT District 9-0
- Zachary Lee, SAP&DC
- Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Agenda
- May 8, 2019 RTTC Meeting Minutes
- Southern Alleghenies RPO FY 2019-2022 TIP Adjustments

- 2021 TIP Program Development Schedule
- SFY 2020-2021 State Funding Distribution
- SFY 2020-2021 Estimated State Funding Distribution
- UPWP and Statewide Planning and Research Work Program Development Timeline
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program Update
- Bedford County Grant Workshop Flyer

II. Review and Approval of the May 8, 2019 RTTC Meeting Minutes

Brandon Carson welcomed the committee to the meeting and Brandon Peters conducted roll call. He asked the committee to review the May 8, 2019, meeting minutes included in the packet.

With no further discussion, Mark Colussy made a motion to approve the May 8, 2019, meeting minutes as presented. Rob Rabena seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. FY 2019-2022 TIP Modifications and Amendments

David Lybarger reviewed the FY 2019-2022 TIP Modifications and Amendments with the committee answering any questions they had. There was one amendment requiring approval. PennDOT opened bids on the Highway Restoration Project on SR 2047, which is old Route 219 into Berlin. There is a cost increase on this project of \$2.3 M putting it above the threshold and requiring a vote. This is also a Project Management Committee (PMC) item and will be contingent on approval by PMC. He explained where the funds would be moved from and assured the committee it would not delay the other projects.

With no further discussion, Mary K. Seville made a motion to approve funding the cost increase on the SR 2047 Highway Restoration Project contingent on approval by the PMC. Frank Hampton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Breezewood Freight Safety Study Update

PennDOT gave an update on the Breezewood Freight Safety Study being done by French Engineering. Anne Stich noted that to date, in addition to the truck survey, staff conducted verbal surveys at both truck stops. The results showed that most truckers that are having issues are unfamiliar with the area. Visibility was also listed time and again in surveys as an issue. PennDOT also now has traffic counts and videos showing a significant number of trucks turning around. This equipment has now been moved closer to Breezewood to determine how many trucks are going past the popular turn around points. PennDOT met with French Engineering and discussed the data collected so far. It was decided to place a camera at the PA 915 and US 30 North intersection, which is farther east than the previous

recording. During the first week of recording, three trucks turned around there. So far, it looks like there are two separate issues: confusion coming off the turnpike into Breezewood due to visibility, and GPS being used that does not show the truck restriction. Vince added that from the survey, they noted that some trucks carrying hazardous materials are getting off in Breezewood to avoid the tunnels. They hope to see from this study if they are continuing on Rt. 30 and ignoring the truck restriction or turning around farther out. French Engineering has some recommendations for signage changes as well as a recommendation for the location of a truck turn around. Some additional funding was required to analyze the camera footage but PennDOT was able to cover it.

Moving forward, PennDOT plans to hold an internal meeting in early August to discuss the recommendations with Tom Prestash. Following that meeting, a stakeholders meeting will be held in late August. PennDOT will then finalize the proposed recommendations.

Commissioner Dallara requested someone talk to the owners of Quality Inn in Breezewood, whose property is frequently damaged by trucks. PennDOT has discussed this with them in the past, but not recently. They will reach out to them again.

V. 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Brandon Carson informed the committee that Brandon Peters and Matthew Bjorkman attended the Planning Partners meeting two weeks ago. He turned it over to Brandon Peters who gave an overview of the financial guidance. He gave a condensed version of the presentations given at that meeting noting that there is \$289 million less overall available funding for the FY 2020-2021 TIP cycle statewide. The investment strategy has shifted from worst first to preservation of good. Interstate maintenance is expediential in the next TIP cycle. There will be more preventative maintenance on bridges and culverts, although some will still need to be replaced. Vince Greenland discussed the benefits of preserving what is good. Brandon Peters continued the presentation answering any questions the committee had with PennDOT's assistance. He showed the projected totals for the Southern Alleghenies RPO, projecting a \$2.5-3 million decrease per year.

He also reviewed the general procedural guidance with the committee answering any questions they had. He reviewed some of the requirements for the TIP as well as the timeline for the FY 2021-2024 TIP development.

VI. ARC Economic Impact Study: Corridor N

Brandon Carson and Brandon Peters met with the Somerset County Commissioners and Ryan Brumsfield from ARC last week to discuss the remaining miles of Route 219 (ADHS Corridor N) south of Maryland. The Somerset County Commissioners met with Tom Prestash and Vince Greenland from PennDOT a few weeks before that and they are working to keep this in the forefront. It was a very good meeting and they came up with some next steps and actions that can be taken by the County and the RPO. There is 5.5

miles remaining down to Maryland. Maryland is committed to completing their portion to I-68. Ryan cited the previously done ARC study titled Economic Analysis of Completing the Appalachian Development Highway System a Technical Report. It looked at the economic impact of completing Corridor N but was completed before Route 219 was completed to Meyersdale. Ryan is looking into the possibility of the RPO using ARC funds to do a study of what the economic impact would be to complete Corridor N now. Ryan requested a meeting with PennDOT Central Office on August 6, 2019, to discuss it. Brandon Peters will be attending that meeting. The study will show the need and support a future application to begin to approach an actual funding scenario. SAP&DC will support this effort.

With no further discussion, Mark Colussy made a motion to recommend the RTCC write a letter to ARC supplying the information necessary to secure or apply for funding for an economic impact study. Bob Reitman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. 2020-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Brandon Peters reviewed the guidelines for the FY 2020-2022 UPWP noting the most recent changes. In the past, the UPWP was a list of things staff could do, now staff must complete what is listed in the document. Once the UPWP is completed, it will be submitted to FHWA for review 45 days before final approval by January 31, 2020. SAP&DC will need to schedule a coordination meeting with PennDOT to discuss the UPWP in mid-August.

There is \$500,000 available statewide in year one of the UPWP for supplemental studies. This is something the RPO has discussed in the past and the potential is there if the committee would like to pursue it. He also reminded the committee that the Southern Alleghenies RPO coordinates the LTAP for the entire PennDOT region. He asked the committee to let him know if there was anything they would like to see staff work on during the upcoming UPWP.

VIII. Other Business

Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) Update

Brandon Carson reminded the committee that changing this program to a brokerage system has been discussed at the last few meetings. There have been some serious concerns about this change. Brandon Peters along with Mike Villeneuve, Zachary Lee, and Julia Dovey put together a Brokerage Statement letter voicing the RPO's concerns. The letter was sent out to the region's legislators. A response was received from Senator Ward's office, a copy of which is included in the meeting packet. The letter acknowledged our concern and noted that the State Senate and House recently approved a Human Services Code measure, Senate Bill 695, which contained a provision providing that the Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Department of Transportation and Aging, may not enter into a

contract for a full-risk brokerage model for the MATP prior to the completion of a study. The legislators received feedback statewide voicing concern. An independent consultant will be used for the study and they hope to have it completed by the end of September.

Grant Writing Workshop

Brandon Peters informed the committee that staff have been working with Commissioner Lang to put together a Grant Writing Workshop in Bedford County. The original plan was to include all six counties, but there are already efforts being organized in a few of the other counties. Even though it is being held in Bedford County, attendees are welcome from anywhere in the region. The workshop will be held on September 26, 2019, from 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM at the Bedford American Legion. The purpose of the workshop is to provide information to municipalities and non-profits on programs available to them and how they can benefit from them. He reviewed the potential presenters and a few of the available programs. If it is well received, SAP&DC plans to hold the workshop in a different county next year. PennDOT agreed to help advertise the workshop if staff can send them the updated flyer.

Brandon Carson noted that on August 27, 2019, there will be a similar event in Ebensburg from 9-11 AM at the Borough Building. While the Bedford workshop will be focused on State funding, this one will be more focused on Federal programs.

Huntingdon County Rail Authority Economic Investigation

Brandon Carson reminded the committee that previously the RPO made the decision to use \$9,000 - \$10,000 of UPWP funds to do a feasibility study on a rail spur in Huntingdon County. The study's intent is to determine the economic viability of the investment. Bob Reiman from Huntingdon County Business & Industry added that the consultant is wrapping things up. There is a lot of interest in the rail line and it has the potential to create as many as 2,500 jobs. Ron Rabena from the Huntingdon County Rail Authority added that it will cost approximately \$6 million to rehab the bridge over the Juniata River for it to be able to carry the rail cars across. The Rail Authority's biggest concerns are finding the 30% match for the bridge project and who will sustain the operating losses in the initial period. The consultant is estimating an operating cost of \$60,000. They still aren't sure what the acquisition cost will be. All agreed it was a great idea but a huge fiscal challenge. The feasibility study should be completed in the next few weeks.

County TIP Outreach

Mark Colussy noted that at the last meeting, the committee decided to discuss how municipal outreach should be carried out going into the next TIP cycle. Currently the counties typically send out their mailings between December and February with the information due back in the spring. With the PennDOT Connects process, that timeline has been moved up. This group also discussed only soliciting for projects during the 12-year plan update rather than every TIP cycle. PennDOT added that it would be best if they received the counties lists by the fall of 2020 for the 2023 TIP. This allows PennDOT to have a draft by the spring of 2021 to begin the PennDOT Connects process. They requested it be discussed at the next PAC meeting as it will work better for them if all six counties are using the same process. PennDOT offered to have someone attend the meeting and

provide an FY 2020-2023 timeline to use at that meeting. PAC meetings typically follow the RTTC meeting, but an additional meeting can be scheduled between now and the December meeting. A report on what is discussed will be given at the next RTTC meeting.

Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee

The Huntingdon County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan states that they should continue to seek bicycle and pedestrian improvements in their transportation network. One of the projects that committee is looking at is safety concerns and signage. One predominately traveled bicycle route intersects with a predominately traveled ATV route. They wanted to know what the proper procedure is to request additional signage at that location. PennDOT responded that the request should come from the municipality, the county, or the RPO and should include the exact locations they are requesting signage. Mark said the committee has a draft letter prepared and Brandon asked he send it to him. The RPO can then submit the letter to PennDOT.

The Huntingdon County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan also recommends education measures be implemented. He asked if there is any kind of education campaign to educate the public on bicycle/motorist laws. Brandon replied that the State did have a campaign on this. This was just discussed by PennDOT at a meeting yesterday. They are working through their press office to see what they can push out publicly. If there is a flyer, they can provide it to them. This is important for the cyclist as well as the motorist as neither are following the law. The next project the Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee is looking at is a bicycle lane thorough Huntingdon.

Billboard Issue

Bob Reitman added that there is a billboard on a PennDOT location on Walnut Creek Road and Rt. 22. HCB&I has an agreement with PennDOT for the billboard, but they can't find it and no one seems to know what it is. They need to know who owns the poles around the billboard. They have become corroded and the sign no longer has light. Vince Greenland agreed to discuss this with him following the meeting.

IX. Adjournment

Mark Colussy made a motion to adjourn at 11:14 AM.

<p><u>NOTE:</u> The next meeting of the RTTC is scheduled for December 4, 2019, at the SAP&DC beginning at 9:00 AM.</p>
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ACTION ITEMS

Date Issued	Action Items	By Whom	Due Date
July 31, 2019	Commissioner Barry Dallara requested someone working on the Breezewood Freight Safety Study talk to the owners of the Quality Inn in Breezewood, whose property is frequently damaged by trucks.	PennDOT	Prior to study completion
July 31, 2019	Provide a report on the discussion on municipal outreach for the TIP process at a special PAC meeting to be scheduled between now and December 4, 2019. The transportation planners for the Altoona and Johnstown MPOs will be invited to that meeting.	Staff	December 4, 2019