

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**May 24, 2017**

**10:00 AM**

**SAP&DC Conference Room**

**Altoona, PA**

**ACTION SUMMARY**

The following are the major actions taken by the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) at its regular meeting held on May 24, 2017, at the SAP&DC in Altoona, PA.

1. Approved the February 22, 2017, RTCC meeting minutes as presented.

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**I. Welcome**

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Commissioner Barry Dallara, Bedford County
- Commissioner Rodney McCray, Fulton County
- Commissioner Jeff Thomas, Huntingdon County
- Commissioner John Vatauvuk, Somerset County
- Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
- Tom Prestash, PennDOT District 9-0
- Steve Howsare, SAP&DC
- Brandon Carson, SAP&DC

Others in attendance included:

- Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman, PennDOT Central Office
- Vince Greenland, PennDOT District 9-0
- Ralph DeStefano, PennDOT District 9-0
- Anne Stich, PennDOT District 9-0
- Rick Suder, Bedford County
- Brad Zearfoss, Somerset County Planning Commission
- Jason Snyder, PSATS/LTAP
- Justin Ruggles, SAP&DC
- Brandon Peters, SAP&DC
- Joseph Saxfield, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Agenda
- February 22, 2017 RTCC Meeting Minutes
- STIC 2015 Fact Sheet
- Edited LRTP Goal, Objectives, and Performance Measures
- 2019 TIP County Priorities
- 2019 Program Development Schedule

- PennDOT Connects Flyer
- PennDOT District 9-0 Connects Tier 1 Status Summary
- Southern Alleghenies RPO TIP Adjustments
- Southern Alleghenies LRTP Public Survey
- Southern Alleghenies RPO LRTP – 2014 PowerPoint Slides
- GRS Bridge Success PowerPoint Slides

## **II. Review and Approval of the February 22, 2017 RTCC Meeting Minutes and Action Items.**

Tom Prestash welcomed the committee to the meeting and Brandon Carson conducted roll call. He asked the committee to review the February 22, 2017, meeting minutes included in the packet.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Barry Dallara made a motion to approve the February 22, 2017, RTCC meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner John Vatauvk seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **III. PennDOT Connects Update**

Tom Prestash introduced Deputy Secretary James Ritzman to the committee to give an update on PennDOT Connects. Deputy Secretary Ritzman stated that District 9-0 has already embraced PennDOT Connects. He noted that Secretary Richards was a former county commissioner, former township supervisor, and planner. Her passion has been about planning, and about communities and local governments. This program will change project delivery and development by engaging local governments before deciding what the scope of work should be. There are two statements that are the official word on PennDOT Connects. They are requiring calibration with stakeholders before project scopes are developed; and that it transforms project development by ensuring that community collaboration happens early so that each project is considered in a holistic way for opportunities to improve safety, mobility, access, and environmental outcomes for all modes and for all local contexts.

PennDOT's annual construction budget is \$2.4 billion per year. Transportation impacts everyone's life everyday so it is very important to invest wisely. One of the big focuses of PennDOT Connects is the planning aspects. It is important to take advantage of county, municipal, and regional plans and studies. PennDOT is increasing the funding available to facilitate these types of projects by \$3 million per year. An announcement will be coming soon. He discussed the State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC), which is comprised of most of the local government associations, contractors, consultants, academia, and other state agencies. Their goal is to bring proven ideas from other areas to the table so that they can be implemented here. An example is high friction surfaces to help keep vehicles on the road on sharp curves.

There are five main focuses of what PennDOT is trying to accomplish. Policy was established last December and outreach training was held with the executives of the MPOs and RPOs. PennDOT will be scheduling three different Planning & Engineering 360 trainings across the state to help planners and engineers understand the value each brings to the table. They are releasing an RFP for local government training and hope to hold 33 across the state, 3 in each district. The design manuals were sent out and comments were due last week. They hope to hire a planner in each engineering district.

The idea of PennDOT Connects is to take a look at the bigger view and take into consideration everything around the project. This allows time to apply for other funding sources available, such as Multimodal and Enhancement, to fund things the community would like to do that are in line with the project. This isn't new to PennDOT District 9-0 as they have done this through all of the 2017 TIP. They reached out and tried to set up approximately 205 meetings. Not all of the municipalities responded, but most of the meetings were held. He reviewed some of the forms and paperwork involved in the process.

March 21<sup>st</sup> was the kick-off for the 2019 program. Tom Prestash added that the main thing District 9 wanted to emphasize was local acceptance. They met with the local planning organizations to see how they recommended a project be approached. It is also important to follow up on any concerns that are voiced throughout the process. One of the surprising things they learned was that approximately 1/3 of the municipalities do not want sidewalks included in their projects. There was some strong push back from some communities on this. PennDOT is willing to include the sidewalks in the projects where it is appropriate but if no one is willing to maintain the sidewalks, they can't be included. Storm water and safety were the highest ranked priority in most communities and transit was the lowest. Jim Ritzman added that Tom and his staff use PennDOT's GIS system to add an overlay of where the transit stops are. This shows that they value it by being aware it and making improvements when they can. They are using simple applications of technology to advance better investments. Tom gave some examples of some of the positives that have come out of the meetings with municipalities so far. The 2019 TIP includes 183 projects with 112 meetings. This number does not include the county priority lists currently being submitted to PennDOT. Tom added that Anne Stich is their planner and complimented her on all the hard work she has put into this.

#### **IV. Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil (GRS) Bridge Presentation**

Jason Snyder from GRS Design Solutions gave a presentation on Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil (GRS) Bridge construction. He gave the committee some background information on himself. He got the idea to use these bridges at a conference and he is currently working on his fourth bridge in his township. The bridges are made of cinderblocks and alternating layers of stones and aggregate that can be combined with beams and a deck to create an integrated bridge system (IBS). The bridges can be built with local labor and common equipment and materials making it an economic and time-efficient method for building and rehabilitating small, single span bridges. These bridges

are built to FHWA guidelines. He has completed 13 bridges now and there are 26 altogether in the Pennsylvania. One bridge in Cumberland Valley Township is being considered for GRS design with technical assistance from PennDOT's LTAP.

He reviewed the steps to construct the bridges and showed the committee several bridges that have been completed with this process. Following the meeting, the committee will be touring the Blair County GRS Bridge, which is one of the bridges presented in the slide show.

## **V. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update**

Brandon Peters reviewed the progress on the LRTP with the committee. He reviewed the visions, goals, and objectives and noted that Listening Sessions were recently held in each of the four rural counties. Turnout at the Listening Sessions was good and one of the things people were interested in was educating the public stakeholders. They received a lot of feedback and have several projects listed in their notes. They will provide this information to Dave Lybarger and Anne Stich at PennDOT.

There have already been 150 responses to the public survey for the LRTP. These responses contain many suggestions and areas they feel need improvement. SAP&DC will continue to push the survey and asked that PennDOT put it on their website as well. He then reviewed the development schedule with the committee.

## **VI. 2019-2022 TIP Update**

Brandon Peters noted that the typical process of soliciting for projects was followed. The majority of the project recommendations have been received, although a few are still coming in. The RPO will be prioritizing the projects through June and July. He showed a list of some of the projects that have been received to date. Bedford County submitted 22 bridges; Fulton County submitted 6 bridge level one forms and 7 safety level one forms; Huntingdon County submitted 3 road improvements, 1 bridge, and 1 safety project; and Somerset County submitted 5 road improvements and 6 bridges for a total of 8 road improvement and 35 bridge improvements that have been submitted as level one forms to PennDOT for the 2019 TIP. Not all of these projects will make it to the TIP. A prioritized list will be compiled and submitted next. The PennDOT Connects process will be followed and hopefully a few of the projects will make it to the 2019 TIP. SAP&DC staff offered to help coordinate the PennDOT Connects meetings in the counties. Brandon Carson asked if the delay with scheduling in Bedford and Fulton Counties was because of Planning Commission meeting schedules. He asked if it would be possible to hold a special meeting to prioritize these projects, as the timeline to hold the PennDOT Connects meetings and then try and get the projects on the 2019 TIP will be very tight. Rick Suder said he would speak to the Planning Director and see what he thought. He noted that if a special meeting was not possible they could conduct an e-memo vote to prioritize the projects. Brandon Carson will reach out to Mary K. Seville in Fulton

County. He noted that the scheduling issues are not the fault of the County Planners as this process is new and the dates were not known in advance. Brandon Peters will put the request in writing and send it to the Bedford and Fulton County Commissioners at the request of the Commissioners.

Brandon Peters reviewed the 2017 dates for the TIP development schedule. A few dates have changed since the committee last saw it. Due to scheduling issues, the November 15<sup>th</sup> RTCC meeting will be a combined meeting with the RTTC. The draft 2019-2022 TIP will be presented at the meeting. A date has not yet been set for the for Local Bridge Sub-Committee meeting.

Brandon Carson added that not everything on the project lists submitted by the counties can be funded. But one aspect not everyone is aware of is that PennDOT continues to monitor those project lists and when projects are in development around the same proximity, those elements are incorporated whenever possible. Vince Greenland gave of few examples of projects this has been done on. Anne Stich also added that the list of projects submitted by the Counties have been mapped and overlaid with the TIP projects. When conducting the PennDOT Connects meetings they can look at any that overlap or are in close proximity and see if they can be incorporated into the project.

Brandon Peters asked that everyone take the survey. There are tablets in the back of the room and paper copies as well if anyone would like to take it today.

Brandon Carson added that Fulton County Medical Center just received \$800,000 from ARC for a local access road project. It was the first local access road approved for FY 17 funds by ARC. SAP&DC has delivered more local access road projects than any other LDD in the state. He thanked Tom Prestash and Vince Greenland for all their assistance and hard work with these projects. Having a design team available in the application process makes a big difference.

## **VII. Adjournment**

## **VIII. Blair County GRS Bridge Site Visit**

<p><b><u>NOTE:</u></b> The next meeting of the RTCC is scheduled for August 23, 2017, at the SAP&amp;DC beginning at 10 AM.</p>
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**ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
May 24, 2017	Provide requests from LRTP Listening Sessions to Dave Lybarger and Anne Stich at PennDOT.	Brandon Peters	Following the meeting
May 24, 2017	Put the request to hold special meetings at the County Planning Commissions in writing and send it to the Bedford and Fulton County Commissioners. The purpose of the special meetings would be to prioritize the county project lists to meet the timeline to hold the PennDOT Connects meetings and then try and get the projects on the 2019 TIP. If a special meeting is not possible e-memo votes could be conducted.	Brandon Peters	Following the meeting