

Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO

Transportation Study Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting

October 7, 2020 10:00 am

Minutes

1. Public Comment:

Mr. Pitoniak opened the meeting with a public comment period for non-agenda items. No public comment was offered.

2. Action Items:

a. Approval of July 15th-Combined Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Pitoniak asked for a Motion from the Technical Committee to approve the Minutes.

For the Technical Committee, Motion made to approve Minutes, by John Pocius, and 2nd by Susan Hazleton, Motion carried.

Mr. Pedri asked for a Motion from the Coordinating Committee to approve the Minutes.

For the Coordinating Committee, Motion made to approve minutes, by Mr. Fiume and 2nd by Mr. Roman, Motion carried.

3. Discussion Items:

a. Fall Project Commencement (Chris Chapman)

2 Projects are scheduled to let from October 1st to the end of December,

MPMS # 112436 Bridge Preservation SR 6006, Carbondale City, Lackawanna County over Racketbrook, Let date October 1.

MPMS # 67434 Bridge Rehabilitation SR 11, Dupont Borough, Luzerne County, over the Railroad and Mill Creek, Let date December 10.

b. LCTA Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study (Lee Horton/Kathy Bednarek)

Feasibility study, considering a competitive FTA grant available in range of \$60 to 90K (estimate from Michael Baker), would help clarify the decision making on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Cover potential routing and essential costs. Mr. Roberts asked if this is a matching grant and added that this is something that we can request supplemental funds through the UPWP. Mr. Fiume asked if the route would extend from Hazleton to Scranton. Ms. Bednarek noted that the monies would be used for rider studies and feasibility of routing.

c. **COLTS extended service to Industrial Parks** (Bob Fiume)

Service began September 8th to Jessup Small Business Center and the Valley View and Mid Valley Industrial Parks. COLTS is working with the Scranton Chamber of Commerce on this project. COLTS is handling service for about 5 people per day and expects ridership to expand as new business such as Chewy.com open. More buy in from local businesses and promotion from COLTS will be considered. A current grant is helping fund the new routes.

d. **Federal Certification Review.** (Jaime Lemon)

Ms. Lemon offered an update on where the Federal Review Team (FTA and FHWA) is with the Lackawanna/Luzerne TMA certification review final report process. The Federal review team write up is complete and a draft copy was made available to county planning staff. The federal planning staff can work on a joint approval letter. FTA final recommendations are in place and out for review. A final draft copy should be available for the next MPO meeting.

Mr. Roberts asked about corrective actions, Ms. Lemon noted that there are no corrective actions and the review has approximately 11 recommendations and 8 commendations.

e. **Lackawanna County Main Avenue Project** (Barbara Idhaw)

Project Phase 3A Main Avenue project was awarded this summer. Utility relocation and signal coordination will be ongoing through end of year. The contractors are scheduled to start in March 2021 with road widening and signal system upgrades. Steve Pitoniak noted that it is a complex project with additional turn lanes in a heavily traveled area of the County. Lackawanna County is using K-Route funding for the project. The project extends from Boulevard Avenue east to Dundaff Street, including an emergency signal at Eagle Lane. Dickson City Borough has a separate PennDot funded grant project at Bowman Street and Main Avenue. A meeting will be set up to consider future MPO funding for other K-Route projects.

f. **Lackawanna/Luzerne K-Route Monies Act 13 funding** (Barb Idhaw)

Lackawanna County has asked to add 6 bridges (all less than 20 feet structures) to the TIP with Act 13 funding:

Bald Mountain Road over tributary to Gardner Creek, Ransom Township. (Deteriorated failing masonry span)

Dark Region Road over tributary to Gardner Creek, Ransom Township (Large radial cracks and deep voids in the masonry work)

Willow Street over tributary to Ackerly Creek, Dalton Borough (Structural issues in timber deck, the bridge closed after inspection)

Freytown Road over the East Branch of Roaring Brook, Covington Township (Structure in poor condition, the structure has full height cracks and deep voids bottom of I beam flanges exposed).

Beaver Pond Road over Gardner Creek, Newton Township (Structure poor condition, moderate to heavy section loss at exposed bottom flanges).

Hack Road over South Branch of Tunkhannock Creek, Benton Township (Large areas of the slab is spalled and there is exposed and corroded reinforcements)

All 6 of these projects are requested to be added to the TIP. Freytown Road, Beaver Pond Road and Hack Road are in Design phase and permits have been submitted.

g. **Lackawanna/Luzerne K-Route Monies**

Mr. Pitoniak has explained the priorities for next round of K-Route funding. John Petrini expressed that Luzerne County will be dedicating its 2021 K-Route funding to Hillside Road in Lehman Township (split ownership of Lehman Township and Luzerne County). Both counties will be having upcoming meetings to discuss K-Route priorities.

Mr. Pocius noted that a few years ago the City of Scranton had requested K-Route funding. Boulevard Avenue and the Parker Street Bridge have been recently discussed by the City in regard to a bridge bundling package from PennDot.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that funding K-Routes had been tied up in Main Avenue projects. He directed Mr. Pocius to have an updated letter sent to the committee noting the K-Routes that the city has prioritized for a future meeting.

Mr. Roberts asked if projects are prioritized based on condition. Steve said mostly condition, but a priority project can be made to fit other criteria.

2. Action Items:

b. Current TIP and Actions

Mr. Fisher mentioned that the Federal Fiscal Year closed out September 30. To close out the 2019 program, a 28 page packet of management and administrative actions were sent to essentially clean up the program.

Administrative actions are needed to move 2019 projects to the 2021 program.

We are now functioning under the 2021 program.

Construction cost increase on **SR 424**, switching to 80% fed funding, 20% state funding. This project will not require a vote.

SR 11 Project crossing Railroad and Mill Creek in Luzerne County, delayed by funding constraint, rail right of way clearance, and COVID-19, need to add to 2021 program.

SR 1043/SR 1014 Pioneer Road Project in Luzerne County, pipe replacement to be 100% federally funded. This is a main corridor in the Dallas area. This project slipped due to multiple factors and needed to be added to the 2021 TIP.

S R 118 was 100% state on the 2019 program for 2019 moved to the 2021 program. HSIP projects were added at the end of the 2019. Since they were not under contract they need to be added to the 2021 program.

Motion SR 11, SR 1043/SR 1014 and HSIP projects

Mr. Pitoniak asked for a Motion to approve additions of the projects to the 2021 program from the Technical committee. Motion made to approve the additions to 2021 projects and HSIP projects by Butch Frati, 2nd by John Pocius. Motion carried.

Dave Pedri asked for a Motion to approve the additions of the projects to the 2021 program from the Coordinating Committee. Motion to approve the additions of the 2021 projects and HSIP projects by Bob Fiume, 2nd by Rich Roman. Motion carried.

4. Progress Reports

a. **Scranton Wilkes-Barre Bicycle Pedestrian Network Plan** (Chris Chapman)

Mr. Chapman noted that a draft copy of the Study will be sent to the committee members and comments are needed by end of month. John Petrini added we would like to have a final draft submitted to DCNR by Thanksgiving. Mr. Pitoniak added that adoption is required by end of the year. Matt Jones will be sharing the study with Luzerne County Planning commission members and the Luzerne County Council. Mr. Jones would like the study completed on time with as little or no controversy at all. Mr. Jones would like to be added to the steering committee to assist with the process. Furthermore, he said the contract with DCNR states that both counties have to approve the study and the study needs to be submitted and approved by the state by end of year.

Mr. Jones stated that this is 3 weeks later than we had expected and he would like to convey a sense of urgency that this project be finished on time. Stephanie corrected Mr. Petrini on the comment date and that DCNR has already started the review process.

John Pocius asked if the respective municipalities would receive a copy of the plan. Mr. Pitoniak confirmed that it would be sent to each city's steering committee member to share with their city and does not need to be adopted by each city.

b. **PennDOT Connects Update**(Steve Fisher)

There was a virtual refresher course for the PennDot Connects system. They were back up to speed on what Connects system has evolved into.

All items on 2021 program not completed will need to be added to the Connects system. PennDOT may need assistance adding the projects into the system. Mr. Petrini mentioned that it was a helpful meeting with planning partners and PennDOT.

Mr. Pitoniak added that many municipal meetings were held on a regional basis and a lot of good input for the development of TIP projects was received. Mr. Fisher noted that the series of Connects meetings with municipalities were quite useful for some TIP projects.

c. Functional Class Update

Mr. Chapman mentioned that Luzerne County met virtually with Lackawanna County and PennDOT staff on the functional classification update. Two meetings have already occurred with two more scheduled. Next step will be to get this to PennDOT Central Office for their approval and then ultimately FHWA.

Mr. Pitoniak mentioned that some roads have not been looked at in over 20 years and we are looking at downgrades and upgrades.

Mr. Petrini added that we do not have exact number of changes. They took roads out that have much less traffic and added roads that are seeing increased traffic. Furthermore, Mr. Petrini stated that they were cognizant not to add more than they were removing to keep proportionately.

Mr. Chapman added that driving patterns have changed and approximately 150 miles of downgrades and or removed and 140 upgrades are being proposed.

Mr. Jones added that patterns have changed in the last few decades. Some roads have less traffic and some never had the traffic that was anticipated. He suggested working with PennDOT to identify roads that have increased traffic and focus on the more travelled roads. We will consider equal numbers of upgrades and downgrades.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that many changes have occurred since the 1990s. The Casey Highway and the Cross Valley Expressway did not exist and Route 309 in the Back Mountain was a 2 lane road.

Mr. Petrini mentioned that Lackawanna & Luzerne County had a meeting last week to discuss segments and the MPO submission as a whole.

Mr. Pitoniak noted that even if a road is downgraded that there are other options to help the municipalities with these roads with help through the State Turn Back Program or other programs. Mr. Pitoniak added that we will coordinate with neighboring counties in an attempt to ensure that functional classification does not change at municipal lines.

Mr. Roberts asked that we reach out to Andrea Bahoric, PennDOT Bureau of Planning and Research to let her know where our progress stands and to see what she needs moving forward.

John Pocius asked if it includes local roads are they included in the update. Mr. Petrini responded that it included State Routes and K-Routes.

d. Long Range and Comprehensive plan Update

Mr. Pitoniak stated that while we are doing both the Comprehensive Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), that they have separate deadlines. The LRTP needs to be adopted by February 17, 2021 and the Comprehensive Plan is set to be adopted in the spring.

Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker, project manager for the Lackawanna/Luzerne Long Range Transportation plan mentioned that there is a February deadline and they are working closely with Lackawanna and Luzerne County Planning Commissions and District 4-0 staff. We need the MPO staff and committees to review the draft plan prior to release to the public. There is a November target for final draft and the plan will be put out for a 30 day public comment period in December.

To begin work on the plan update, there were meetings with the MPO staff for an update of the 2016 LRTP and discuss the areas of emphasis. Also, the Comprehensive plan is being updated at same time and is usually updated every 10 years. The LRTP is usually reviewed every 4-5 years. A number of changes have occurred since 2016.

There have been a series of management team meetings including MPO staff, District 4-0, Central Office and FHWA. Steering committees have been virtual as have focus groups other than the 1st meeting which was face to face prior to the pandemic. A Metroquest survey covered many area of the plan. Virtual meetings have been well attended and productive. One public meeting was conducted in July with another one that will be a part of the 30 day public review comment period.

Mr. Funkhouser offered an overview of the plan with a series of slides on existing conditions as they relate to transportation, current demographic information and the implication on transportation for aging population along with how to make transportation friendlier for the older population.

- A slide showing ownership of the local network listing was presented with approximately 64 percent, opposed to 33 percent of state roads that carry about 80 percent of the traffic coming particularly from the interstates. The demand for travel is about 13 million miles per day in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties. Demand for travel is affected by the economy which is improving. The 2019 traffic figures increased but the 2020 numbers will probably decline due to the pandemic.
- An overview of crash data was presented that showed a 5 year window of total crashes increasing but the severity of the crashes has been decreasing.

- A section of the plan relates to state and local bridges and how the bridge inventory is performing. It shows the percentage of bridges listed as poor; many were built in 1950s and 1960s and are now in need of rehabilitation or replacement. Local bridges from 1920s and 1930s are near the end of their useful life.
- The plan is multimodal and focuses on the other modes of transportation. COLTS, HPT and LCTA provide 2.3 million transit trips per year 60 fixed bus routes and 310,000 shared ride trips.
- Transportation Performance Measures have raised the bar on how we evaluate our roadway system. It quantifies how well our assets are performing against the performance standards.
- The Freight component in the LRTP shows the region's dramatic changes in traffic and the boom in online retailing with expanding warehouse and distribution operations affecting travel patterns. It also addresses truck traffic moving freight throughout the region and truck parking.
- Active transportation addresses bicycle, pedestrian and other non-motorized users within the plan.

A section on the strategic components of what the MPO should be working on over the next several years which will ultimately become work activities was presented. This includes but is not limited to safety, accessibility, multimodal connectivity, preservation and environmental operation and maintenance and includes projects lists and policy area implementation.

Federal law requires transportation revenue forecasts as part of the plan. We need to document the amount of revenue forecast reasonably expected throughout the life of the LRTP to 2045. The 2021 program includes \$277M in the 1st four year period and over 12 years that totals \$640 M. The overall LRTP (long term) is valued at 1.2B through 2045. Projections includes the 12 year program and financial guidance figures from PennDot. Baker usually uses a conservative forecast without assuming any major state or federal revenue enhancements. There is a mix of fiscally constrained projects, such as projects in the 12 year program and additionally regional line items. The regional line items would help carry us from years 13 through 25. Other line items including the Transit TIP and Interstate TIP don't count against the forecast, but are shown for informational purposes. The non-constrained items include carryover projects from previous LRTP's as

well as candidate projects that we received from the public that are outside of fiscal constraint. The next steps will be to continue working with the management team at a staff level from here to the finish line to develop a proposed programs work. There will be a meeting later this month with environmental resource agencies to discuss how the LRTP interacts with their resources

Michael Baker is working on the air quality conformity analysis to be completed before the 30 day public comment period, The Benefit and Burdens Analysis helps us understand how the program effects low income and minority population in region.

As we move to plan adoption process over the next few weeks, we will be working with MPO staff to finalize a draft for comment and questions. A final draft should be available in November and then go out for public review in December. January will be used to refine the draft and review the plan and final write up to prepare for a February 3 adoption date.

Mr. Jones commented that Mr. Funkhouser and team are quite expeditious and responsive in performing work on the study and offered a thank you for their hard work.

Mr. Roberts asked that a draft be forwarded to Ms. Lemon at FHWA. Also, there is a technical correction to run all projects through the air quality reports electronically.

e. 2021 LLTS MPO Meetings

Mr. Petrini brought up schedule for the MPO meetings:

Wednesday Feb 3, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

Wednesday April 21, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

Wednesday July 21, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

Wednesday Oct 6, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

Ms. Sacco requested to change the meeting dates to avoid conflict with the Lackawanna County Commissioners meetings. Mr. Pedri suggested to move to Thursday at 10:00 am, but there was a concern of a conflict with the Lackawanna County Planning Commission meetings. Mr. Petrini suggested Wednesday at 1:00 pm rather than Thursday. Mr. Pitoniak asked for anyone to bring up conflicts with the scheduling. After a discussion, the existing dates will stand with a change to 1:00 PM start time. Mr. Petrini will forward an updated schedule.

The updated schedule is as follows:

Wednesday February 3, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

Wednesday April 21, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

Wednesday July 21, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

Wednesday Oct 6, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

Mr. Pitoniak offered a reminder for the LRTP Steering Committee meeting at 1 pm. Then asked for a Motion to adjourn from the Technical Committee.

A Motion from the Technical Committee to adjourn was brought by John Pocius and 2nd by John Petrini. Motion carried.

Mr. Pedri asked for a Motion from the Coordinating Committee to Adjourn.

A Motion from the Coordinating Committee to adjourn was brought by Rich Roman 2nd by Brenda Sacco. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned.

LACKAWANNA-LUZERNE TRANSPORTATION
STUDY MEETING
MPO TECHNICAL - COORDINATING COMMITTEES
October 7, 2020

COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<u>MEMBER PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT & NO PROXY</u>	<u>PROXY PRESENT</u>
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PENNDOT

Richard N. Roman, District 4-0 Office
Kristin Mulkerin, Central Office

X		
X		

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Vacant (Board of Commissioners)
Brenda N. Sacco, Director of Planning & Economic Development

	X	
X		

LUZERNE COUNTY

C. David Pedri, County Manager, Committee Chair

X		
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CITY OF HAZLETON

Jeffrey L. Cusat, Mayor - (Alan Wufsus, Hazleton City Engineering Technician – Permanent Proxy)

		X
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CITY OF SCRANTON

Paige Cognetti, Mayor – (John Pocius, LaBella Associates – Permanent Proxy)

		X
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CITY OF WILKES-BARRE

George Brown, Mayor – (Attilio “Butch” Frati, Director of Operations – Permanent Proxy)

		X
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TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Robert Fiume, COLTS Director, Committee Vice-Chair X

TRANSIT REPRESENTATIVE – LUZERNE COUNTY

Lee Horton, LCTA Interim Executive Director – (Kathy Bednarek, LCTA Grants Coordinator – Permanent Proxy) X

AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Carl Beardsley, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Director X

*PA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

Larry Malski, President X

*FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Jamie Lemon, Community Planner X

*FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)

Timothy Lidiak, Project Manager X

*FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Lori Pagnanelli, District Office Manager X

*SENATOR BLAKE’S OFFICE (LACKAWANNA)

Larry West, Regional Director X

*Non-Voting Members

LLTS Technical Committee Members Present:

Steve Pitoniak,
Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission, Committee Chair
Dean Roberts,
PennDOT Central Office, Committee Vice-Chair
Susan Hazelton,
PennDOT District 4-0 Assistant District Executive for Design
Gerard Babinski,
PennDOT District 4-0 District Bridge Engineer
Brenda Sacco,
Lackawanna County, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Barbara Idhaw
Lackawanna County, Engineering Consultant, Greeman-Pederson, Inc.
John Petrini,
Luzerne County, Transportation Planner
Chris Chapman,
Luzerne County, Transportation Planner

John Pocius,
Proxy for Scranton City Mayor, Paige Cognetti, Engineering Consultant, LaBella Associates

Attilio “Butch” Frati,
Director of Operations, Proxy for Wilkes-Barre City Mayor, George Brown
Lee Horton
Luzerne County Transit Representative, LCTA
Stephen Mykulyn,
Lackawanna County Aviation Representative
Alan Baranski,
Proxy for Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance Member, Jeff Box
Matt Jones,
Executive Director, Luzerne County Planning and Zoning
Ralph Sharp,
Hazleton Public Transit, Proxy for Mayor Cusat
Jamie Lemon,
FHWA Community Planner

LLTS Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Members *Present*:

Stephanie Milewski, North Pocono Trails Association
Shane Novak, Luzerne County Planning Commission

Non-Members *Present*:

Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4-0
Jay Schectman, Lackawanna County Planning
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Julianne Lawson, PennDOT District 4-0 Planning and Programming
Kate McMahon, NEPA Alliance
Mike Taluto, PennDot District 4-0
Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International
Chris Rabasco, Michael Baker International
Jessica Kalinoski, PennDOT District 4-0
Steve Novak