

DRAFT
READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN PERSON AND
VIRTUALLY
MAY 18, 2023

ATTENDANCE

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Christopher Kufro, PennDOT 5-0 Chair*
Mark Tobin, PennDOT Program Center (V)
Donna Reed, City of Reading
Tom McKeon, Berks County Planning Commission (V)
Sam Kalbach, 1st Class Townships (Cumru Township) (V)
Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority, Alternate (V)
Kevin Barnhardt, Reading Regional Airport Authority
Commissioner Michael Rivera, County of Berks
Brian Hoffa, Boroughs (Sinking Spring) (V)

*Tie-breaking vote only
(V) Attended Virtually

COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Mike Kocher, 2nd Class Townships (Spring Township) (V)

OTHERS

David Alas, PennDOT Central (V)
James Mosca, PennDOT Central (V)
Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Michael Donchez, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Vanessa Koenigkramer, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Matthew Boyer, Commuter Services of PA
Lauri Ahlskog, South Central Transit Authority (V)
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
Armando Marrero, College Heights Community Council
Diann Connor, College Heights Community Council
Sherlene Evans, College Heights Community Council
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission
David Hunter, Berks County Planning Commission
Matthew McGough, Berks County Planning Commission (V)
Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission
Malcom Townes, Berks County Information Systems (V)
Heather Berger, Berks County Information Systems

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kufro called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Chairman Kufro stated that Secretary Michael Carroll has been officially confirmed as the new Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation. Secretary Carroll has recently asked District 5-0 Executive, Mr. Michael Rebert, to join him in Central Office as the Acting Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration. Mr. Rebert accepted the position and requested that I return to District 5-0 as District Executive. For the last year and a half, I have been District Executive for District 8-0.

Ms. Reed stated that there are traffic concerns among residents of the Hampden Heights area along Hampden Boulevard in the City of Reading. Mr. Marrero stated that there are many accidents that create impacts to his property along the 1600 block of Hampden Boulevard. Most recently, an accident involving a motorcycle that was a gruesome fatality. Ms. Connor stated that Hampden Boulevard has a posted speed limit of 35 mph but vehicles using the roadway travel at speeds well above the posted speed limit. In addition, site distance at several intersections with Hampden Boulevard is minimal. Ms. Evans stated that vehicles will pass other vehicles on Hampden Boulevard but there are no existing passing zones along the roadway. Aggressive drivers, speeding, and reckless driving behaviors along the roadway are topics at every College Heights Community Council meeting that prelude discussions on what improvements can be made to reduce the traffic issues along Hampden Boulevard.

Ms. Reed stated that there has been a lot of outreach to her regarding the traffic issues along Hampden Boulevard. Last week there were four accidents along the roadway in a 30 hour time period. There are no traffic control devices along Hampden Boulevard from Spring Street in the City of Reading to beyond the City limits into Muhlenberg. Hampden Boulevard is considered an arterial roadway and it is the understanding of City Council that the Council has the ability to redesignate the roadway in the City of Reading as a thruway which would allow the Council to install stop signs or other traffic control devices at certain intersections along Hampden Boulevard in the City of Reading. Ms. Reed asked if Council can work with PennDOT, since Hampden Boulevard is a state-owned roadway, to discuss potential traffic calming measures that can be implemented. Chairman Kufro responded that he will share the information with the District's Traffic Unit and noted that enforcement is part of the answer for addressing the traffic issues along Hampden Boulevard. Ms. Reed asked if a meeting between the City of Reading, PennDOT, and other involved parties can be coordinated within a month to begin discussing ways to address the traffic issues. Chairman Kufro confirmed that a meeting can be scheduled within a month.

3. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JOINT TECHNICAL AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 9, 2023

Chairman Kufro asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 9, 2023 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the March 9, 2023 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2023-2026 TIP

Mr. Donchez gave an update on PennDOT's requested Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from March 3, 2023 to April 28, 2023.

- There are seven (7) Administrative Actions – the adjustments deal with increases for revised estimates, increases to meet low-bid and estimated costs for projects, and aligning funds to meet projected let dates.
- There are two (2) Statewide Administrative Actions – the adjustments deal with increases to meet low-bid and adding Reading MPOs portion of the Carbon Reduction Program funds to the TIP.
- There are two (2) Amendments – the first amendment is for the SR 222 and Long Lane Intersection Improvement project to address a construction phase cost increase of approximately \$3.3 million to cover the latest design estimate. The construction cost increase is a result of issues regarding project availability, rapidly increasing inflation prices related to petroleum, steel and concrete based items, and unit cost increases for 12-inch superpave up to approximately \$92 per unit from \$37 per unit. Funding sources to balance the costs come from the SR 422 in Sinking Spring project, US 222 Widening project, CMAQ Reserve Line Item, Urban Reserve Line Item, and Highway and Bridge Reserve Line Item.

The second amendment is for the PA 61 Restoration Phase 2A project for a \$4.7 million construction cost increase and for the SR 61 Bridge Rehabilitation project for approximately a \$4 million construction cost increase. These increases are for materials, fuel costs, trucking costs, equipment costs, labor costs, and aggregate costs. For the PA 61 Restoration Phase 2A project, the adjustment includes adding full depth shoulder reconstruction for approximately \$1.8 million, traffic control during construction for approximately \$900,000, concrete pavement patching and concrete median barriers, and several other smaller items that add up to the \$4.7 million. For the SR 61 Bridge Rehabilitation project, the adjustment includes unit cost increases for items such as concrete for the bridge and roadway element which increased 65% in unit costs for approximately \$1.3 million, concrete repairs on the superstructure and substructure for approximately \$570,000, latex modified overlay for the deck for approximately \$500,000, and several other smaller items that add up to the approximately \$4 million. To cover

the cost increase, funds from the US 222 Widening project, Urban Reserve Line Item, and Highway and Bridge Reserve Line Item will be used. Both of these projects will be let on July 13, 2023 and will be let as a parent/child. Both of these projects received PMC approval.

MOTION: Mr. Barnhardt made a motion to approve the Amendment for the SR 222 and Long Lane Intersection Improvement project. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Barnhardt made a motion to approve the Amendment for the PA 61 Restoration Phase 2A and SR 61 Bridge Rehabilitation project. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. UPDATE ON FFY 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROCESS

Mr. Piper stated that for the past month the State Transportation Commission (STC) had its public comment period open for the update of the state's Twelve-Year Program (TYP). As a reminder, we use the results from their surveys to help us develop the Reading MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The STC survey just closed at the end of April 2023.

The state exceeded their goal of 10,000 survey participants and received nearly 10,600 responses which is the highest ever for public participation during the public comment period. STC will go through the results during the months of May and June to compile and sort the data by MPOs across the state. Once complete, STC will provide both statewide results and Berks County results to the Reading MPO. Once we receive that data, we will report the results at a future meeting.

In addition, while the public comment period on the TYP is closed, the STC will be leaving the transportation survey open until September 2023 for additional project recommendations and to allow additional concerns to be received. We will be doing some follow up public outreach to inform people of the opportunity.

Mr. Piper stated that a few weeks ago the MPOs across the state met and provided concurrence on both the Financial Guidance and the General and Procedural Guidance for the FFY 2025-2028 TIP.

The next steps for the TIP program development will be to begin to put together a survey for us to send out to municipalities and the public to get additional feedback on potential projects. Over the summer months, we will begin coordination with the District staff in the various program areas to start looking at projects to be carried forward, adjustments that may be necessary, and any future projects that could be added to the next TIP. The goal is to have a draft list of projects adopted by the end of the calendar year. Once we have an adopted list of projects, we will run the Air Quality Conformity analysis on the projects listed and compare the project list to the Environmental Justice requirements. Once we have a draft TIP document, it will go out for public comment in the spring of 2024 with anticipated

adoption by the MPO in May 2024. After it is adopted by the MPO, it will be submitted to the State Transportation Commission and then submitted to FHWA for approval prior to September 1, 2024.

For the 4-year TIP, the overall total funding amounts to approximately 7.3% higher than we were anticipating under the prior program. The balance of the TYP from 2029 through 2036 has a funding increase of approximately 10% in an individual year over the projections. There is no growth built in from 2029 to 2036 because that is after both the state and federal legislation has been enacted. As a standard, the funding level remains steady at the same level as the last year the legislation covers.

Based on the increases we are seeing in product costs and other costs related to the current state of inflation, the impact of the increases in anticipated funding may be negligible when examining the list of projects for potential additional projects that could be added to the next TIP.

As far as the Highway and Bridge dollars are concerned, there are a few trends of note. Because we have new Census data and because we re-evaluate the road conditions every year, there were some minor adjustments in programs that relate to those categories. We lost about 3% in our National Highway Performance Program funds, 1% in STP funds, and 10% in Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds. The reduction in HSIP funds to the MPO is related to the fact that there was an increase in the Set-Aside that is held by the state for statewide distribution. State Highway and Bridge Programs are projected to increase significantly. The state Highway increase is approximately 13% in 2025 up to 41% in 2028. The state Bridge Program increases approximately 14% across the 4-year TIP. The NHPP has a continuing decrease across the 4-year TIP cycle that is still a direct result of the agreement to transfer additional funding to the Interstate Program. In 2028, the annual transfers from the NHPP funds hold steady from that year moving forward.

There are two new funding sources that can be used to fund projects on the next TIP. The Carbon Reduction Program and Carbon Reduction-Urban Program funding are for air quality related projects that help reduce carbon emissions. For each year of the 4-year TIP, we will receive a total of approximately \$1 million between these two funding sources.

6. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RATS ANNUAL PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITION REPORT

Mr. Piper stated that part of the process to update the TIP involves meeting certain Performance Measures. The first report relates to Pavement and Bridge Performance Measures and the second report relates to Safety Performance Measures. Staff will be producing these two reports on an annual basis that will provide updated information on the conditions that we are experiencing here in Berks County. Both reports will be used as resource documentation as we enter into the process of updating the current and future TIPs and LRTPs. Because these were the first iteration of these reports, the documents being presented today are based on 2021 statistics which were the best data that was available when we began preparing these reports at the end of 2022. From here on out, we will be updating

these documents as the data becomes available which means another updated version of these reports will likely be presented again later this year.

Ms. Hain stated that the draft Annual Pavement and Bridge Condition Report is for 2021 data. PennDOT pulls the data for the previous year at the very beginning of the calendar year in January. Once PennDOT analyzes the data, they provide a report to the MPO in August comparing the pavement and bridge conditions against the adopted Performance Measures.

In the report, Section 1 is the introduction, Section 2 reviews pavement conditions, Section 3 reviews bridge conditions, Section 4 is the mapping for pavement and bridge conditions, and Section 5 is the projects on the current TIP that address pavement and bridge conditions.

The goal of the report is to help guide investment decisions to keep Berks County's roads and bridges in good order by determining potential projects for inclusion in the Reading Area Transportation Study TIP and LRTP.

The report includes information on RATS consistency with the statewide Performance Measures. There are 6 Performance Measures: 4 for pavements and 2 for bridges. Since RATS' interests extend beyond those included in PennDOT's Performance Measures Annual Reports, the data is analyzed not only for road and bridge groups included in that report but also for the local Federal Aid roads and locally owned bridges.

The report includes pavement data from the MAP-21 Reported Road Groups, PennDOT Reported Road Groups, and RATS Reported Road Groups. MAP-21 Pavement Performance looks at good condition pavement by Business Plan Network and poor condition pavement by Business Plan Network. Our report also includes National Highway System (NHS) fair condition pavement in addition to the good and poor condition pavement for a more complete picture of the pavement conditions in Berks County.

One thing we wanted to do in this report is to develop a quick and easy way to look at the information, see where we need to invest money, and identify areas in good and poor conditions. So, we developed a Pavement Condition Scorecard that identifies the trends and provides a brief description for each indicator identified. In addition, a chart for pavement IRI on the Business Plan Network and trend graphs for each level of the Business Plan Network from 2017-2021 are included in the report.

The report includes bridge data from the Map-21 Reported Bridge Groups, PennDOT Reported Bridge Groups, and RATS Reported Bridge Groups. MAP-21 Bridge Performance looks at poor condition bridges and good condition bridges on the Business Plan Network based on NHS bridges that are greater than or equal to 20 feet in length. Our report also includes NHS fair condition bridges for a more complete picture of bridge conditions in Berks County.

Once again, a Bridge Condition Scorecard was developed that identifies the trends and provides a brief description for each indicator identified. The same process was followed for

looking at state-owned bridges by deck area for bridges greater than or equal to 8 feet in length. Local-owned bridge conditions by number of bridges and by deck area for bridges that are greater than or equal to 20 feet in length on the Business Plan Network was included in the report.

Ms. Hain stated that the report includes a countywide map of the IRI for the National Highway System roads in Berks County and regional maps that include the IRI, pavement, and bridge conditions.

The report also includes the projects programmed on the FFY 2023-2026 TIP that directly address pavement and bridge conditions. Additional projects that may include pavement and bridge improvements as part of a different type of project are included in the text.

Mr. Piper noted that charts for the local-owned bridges, when compared to the charts for the state-owned bridges, identify a larger number of local-owned bridges in poor condition than the state-owned bridges. A lot of time has been spent on improving the state-owned system of bridges, but at some point, a lot more will have to be done to address those local-owned poor condition bridges.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to approve the RATS Annual Pavement and Bridge Condition Report. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RATS TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORT

Ms. Timochenko stated that this is the first time we have prepared a Traffic Safety Report for RATS that will be updated on an annual basis. The goal of the report is to identify ways to reduce the number of crashes on Berks County roadways and prevent fatalities and serious injuries through the examination of crash trends and identification of mitigation strategies. The report will be used as a guide when determining potential projects for inclusion in the RATS TIP and LRTP.

The report was based on research and information gathered from several plans including Toward Zero Deaths (TZD): A National Strategy on Highway Safety, the Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and the PennDOT District 5-0 Highway Safety Plan. All of the plans, including this report, incorporate the theme of a Safe System Approach that involves anticipating human mistakes by designing and managing roadway infrastructure that reduces and minimizes the risk of potential mistakes.

Federal regulations regarding the National Performance Management Measures for the Highway Safety Improvement Program require PennDOT to establish Performance Measures and targets to evaluate and improve safety within the transportation system. In addition, federal regulations require MPOs to establish safety targets either by agreeing to plan and program projects in support of the PennDOT targets or by establishing their own quantifiable

targets. As you may recall, this MPO most recently adopted the recommended state Performance Measures and targets in January of this year.

All of the datasets included in the plan cover the 5-year period from 2017 to 2021. The development of this report began at the end of last year, and the data available at that time only extended through 2021. The report includes some basic travel demand factors that influence transportation trends, behaviors, and needs within the County which are population, employment, passenger car registration, and vehicle miles traveled. All the crash data found in the report was derived from PennDOT's Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool. The crash datasets were based on the 3 priority emphasis areas and 15 safety focus areas identified in the Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan. All of the crash datasets in the plan breakdown the total number of crashes for the 5-year period and include a breakdown of the crashes that involved fatalities and suspected serious injuries.

We developed a trend summary report, similar to the scorecard that the State Transportation Commission provides at the start of their 12-Year Program Update. It includes a brief description or summary of the trend for the indicator identified and has trend ratings that are a visual representation of areas that are seeing improvement, remain steady, or have declined from 2017 to 2021. The indicators identified in the report are based on the indicators relating to safety identified in the STC Scorecard, the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan priority emphasis areas and safety focus areas, and the crash data included in the report.

The Federal Highway Administration identifies 28 proven safety countermeasures that aid in reducing fatalities and suspected serious injuries on all types of roadways for all types of users. Those countermeasures are included in the report and includes a brief description for each of their 28 safety countermeasures. Some additional countermeasures that help mitigate driver behaviors were included which are education and enforcement. Many of these strategies are programs and campaigns that PennDOT carries out in cooperation with state and local law enforcement officials.

Using Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool data, the report includes a map that identifies the distribution of crash locations that have greater than 20 reportable crashes. We also included a list and a map of the 16 projects currently programmed on the FFY 2023-2026 TIP that specifically address safety. Other projects programmed on the TIP may include safety as a component dependent upon the type of improvement programmed. Mr. Piper stated that that projects that are programmed on the current TIP are based on crash statistics from prior years. When we take the data from this report, we will be addressing the crash locations that are identified in this report to look at these crash locations and identify potential projects that might address them in the next TIP update.

Additional projects programmed on the TIP help address emergent safety issues on Berks County roadways which include Intelligent Transportation System elements such as cameras and dynamic message signs and Freeway Service Patrol Routes which helps to secure crash scenes, provide first aid, and control traffic to minimize additional incidents and improve emergent safety conditions.

Ms. Timochenko stated that the report was provided to PennDOT's District 5-0 Traffic and Operations Engineer. They reviewed the report and provided a few comments that were relatively minor edits that were addressed and corrected in the draft available today for approval.

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the RATS Traffic Safety Report.
Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF URBAN AREA SMOOTHING

Mr. Golembiewski stated that the Census Bureau's urban-rural classification is a delineation of geographic areas that identify both individual Urban Areas and the Rural Areas of the nation. Urban Areas represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. Every ten years, after the Decennial Census, Urban Areas are defined by the Census Bureau. They used to be defined purely on a population basis. This time the Urban Areas are defined based on both population and housing. With those changes in criteria, along with the changes in population and growth in Berks County, the Urban Area definition itself has changed.

The 2010 Decennial Census identified 64.7% of Berks County's total population as being Urban. The 2020 Decennial Census now identifies 64.4% of Berks County's total population as being Urban.

The 2020 Urban Area extends along the major roadways in Berks County such as Route 61 into Hamburg, east and west of the City of Reading along Route 422, along a portion of Route 222 breaking towards Fleetwood Borough, and within the urban core which is the City of Reading. As a result of using the criteria to delineate the Urban Areas, based on block level data, there are small gaps that occur between the identified Urban Areas.

The 'Smoothing' process completes 'missing gaps' in the Census-defined Urban Area. Smoothing is completed for transportation purposes related to the Federal Aid Functional Classification System. Every roadway has a classification based on what the roadway is designed to do, the amount of traffic carried, how a roadway is built, speed limits of roadways, and whether they are urban or rural roadways. The design standards are affected by the designation of a roadway as well as whether federal Surface Transportation Block Grant – Urban (STU) funds can be used. Urban (STU) funds can only be used for improvements on roadways designated as Urban. The 'Smoothing' process fills in the gaps between the Census-defined Urban Areas so that roadway classifications and ultimately design standards for those roadways remain consistent.

Because the Urban Areas are based on population and housing criteria, some adjacent Urban Areas extend into Berks County and the Reading Urban Area extends into other counties and MPO planning regions. To address the crossover of Urban Areas into other counties and MPO regions, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are executed between RATS and the surrounding MPOs. These MOUs identify the responsible parties for planning and funding in those designated portions of the Urban Area extensions. As a result of the

updated Urban Area boundaries, these MOUs will ultimately need to be updated as well and are required by FHWA and PennDOT.

A small portion of the Reading Urban Area extends into Lebanon County along Route 419. Two small areas of the Lehigh Valley Urban Area extend into Berks County: one along Route 222 and the other along I-78 at the border with Lehigh County. The Philadelphia Urban Area expanded to include what used to be the Pottstown Urban Area. Additionally, the Reading Urban Area north of Hamburg has retracted and no longer extends into Schuylkill County.

If we use the same formula that was previously used to determine the dollar amount of STU funding given to NEPA for the Reading Urban Area extension, roughly \$340,000 per year or approximately \$1.3 million during the FFY 2025-2028 TIP cycle could be requested by the RATS MPO from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission MPO (DVRPC) to be applied to improvements in the portion of the Philadelphia Urban Area that extends into Berks County. This STU allocation request would be subject to both MPO's approval during the MOU update process.

At the May 2023 Technical Committee meeting, a recommendation was made to approve the proposed 'Smoothing' subject to comments received from the surrounding MPOs. Once the Coordinating Committee approves the proposed 'Smoothing', it will be submitted to PennDOT for their approval. Once PennDOT gets all the 'Smoothing' information gathered from all the MPOs across the state, they submit it to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. After FHWA approves the 'Smoothing', the MPO can review and make possible changes to the Federal Aid Functional Classification System. After that, the MOUs with the surrounding MPOs will be revised and updated for approval by this Committee.

Mr. Piper noted that the Pottstown Urban Area and the Reading Urban Area used to be separated by a single point. The Urban Area in Amity Township and Birdsboro Borough is a separate Urban Area that is neither a part of the Reading Urban Area nor the Philadelphia Urban Area. At some future point, the Philadelphia Urban Area may end up encompassing the Reading Urban Area.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to approve the Urban Area 'Smoothing'. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

9. REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT DRAFT RATS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND DRAFT RATS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

Mr. Golembiewski stated that both the RATS Public Participation Plan (PPP) and the RATS Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) are required under various federal statutes and Executive Orders. The PPP outlines how we reach out to the public and gather input from them. The LEP examines non-English speaking needs and how to address them. Both of these documents were last adopted by RATS in July 2017 and need to be periodically reviewed and updated.

The PPP covers all the outreach strategies that involve our documents, website, meetings, advertisements, language accessibility, social media outreach, and virtual public engagement.

The LEP requires a four-factor self-assessment. These include:

- The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or service
- The frequency with which LEP individuals encounter the program and/or activities
- The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided to people's lives, and
- The resources available to the federal financial recipient and costs

When we look at language groups, the Census Bureau asks the question in the American Community Survey (ACS) 'Do you speak English less than very well or not at all?'. Then they break it down to a number of non-English speaking groups. Anyone that is familiar with Berks County knows that there are over 26,000 Spanish speaking persons in the County that do not speak any English. The second highest non-English speaking population in Berks County falls into the Other Indo-European language group. Other Indo-European includes anything from Portuguese, German, Italian, Russian, Polish, Eastern European languages, and several more totaling 42 languages.

The way the legislation is written, we must make accommodations for any non-English speaking language group that is 1,000 persons or more, or 1% of the total non-English speaking population. In our case, with over 26,000 Spanish speaking only individuals in the County, that is the population that we must make accommodations for directly. We have to be able to provide opportunities for non-English speaking populations to access our documents and communicate with us.

Everyone travels using the transportation system and how we plan is important to every single person using the system. As a result, we will take reasonable steps to make sure everyone has access to our decisions and our processes.

The two main resources we need to utilize are document translation and oral interpretation. Translation is for the written word and interpretation is the spoken word. Neither RATS nor the Berks County Planning Commission directly contract for these services. They are available to us through the County. Berks County has 3 individuals that do written translations and 1 firm that does the on demand oral interpretation or meeting interpretation as necessary. As far as RATS goes, it is up to us to make sure that the County is maintaining those contracts and that we have access to them when necessary. It is also incumbent on us to make sure that we know how to use those services.

It is our policy to ensure that we are identifying those non-English speaking communities, we are reaching out to them, and providing language assistance to anybody that needs it at any time.

At the May 2023 Technical Committee meeting, the recommendation was made to approve the release of these two documents for a 45-day public comment period. The public comment period would begin on May 28, 2023 and end on July 11, 2023. There will be a public survey and two public meetings during the public comment period: one virtual and one in person. Once the public comment period ends, we will review and incorporate any comments received and document the public input and everything done during the public comment period. The goal is to receive approval for both documents at the July 20, 2023 Coordinating Committee meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the release of the RATS Public Participation Plan and RATS Limited English Proficiency Plan for public comment. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

10. REVIEW/APPROVAL LETTER OF COMPLIANCE HAMBURG BOROUGH WALK WORKS GRANT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Piper stated that Letters of Support are not normally provided by the MPO for applications seeking funding for transportation related projects because the projects usually go through the MPO for formal recommendation and approval. WalkWorks is a program that is developed in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. The Borough of Hamburg is seeking funding in the amount of \$30,000 to develop an active transportation plan for the Borough. Part of the application process requires a letter of consistency from the regional MPO. The application is consistent with the MPO plans and with Berks County plans.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to approve a letter of support for the application to WalkWorks for the Borough of Hamburg to develop an active transportation plan for the Borough. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

11. MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT

Mr. Piper gave an update on the status of major projects.

12. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Boyer stated that the Commuter Services outreach staff continues to meet with groups, individuals, and businesses. The outreach team has been in contact with recent site visits to Boscov's, Penn State Health St. Joseph, Ashley Furniture, PA Career Link, and Reading Area Community College within the past month.

Commuter Services wrapped up the Earth Month promotion at the end of April, 2023. Currently, Commuter Services staff is gearing up for the Staffing Agency Showdown promotion for a competition between staffing agencies. May is Bike Month and the Bike to Work week ride will be on Friday, May 19. This is the first Bike to Work week ride that has been organized since 2019 as a result of COVID. Reading Hospital / Tower Health and

Penske Racing Shocks are sponsoring the event. In addition, Commuter Services will be receiving two e-bikes through donation; one will be given to the West Reading Police Department and the second one will be given to the Reading Police.

Commuter Services is very involved in the regional bike share initiative to facilitate installation of bike share programs across county borders within Commuter Services' nine county region. In Berks County, some of the partners Commuter Services is currently working with include Wyomissing Borough, Tower Health, and Alvernia University.

During the month of April, 242 new members joined the program, over 8,700 trips were tracked, and over 139,000 miles not driven were recorded for a savings of over \$87,000 as a result of using green modes of transportation.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business from the floor. Ms. Timochenko stated that there was no online public comment.

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:39 PM.

Date: _____

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Alan D. Piper