

DRAFT  
READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
MINUTES OF THE JOINT TECHNICAL AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY  
MARCH 9, 2023

ATTENDANCE

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Michael Rebert, PennDOT 5-0 Chair\*  
Mark Tobin, PennDOT Program Center (V)  
Donna Reed, City of Reading  
Tom McKeon, Berks County Planning Commission (V)  
Sam Kalbach, 1<sup>st</sup> Class Townships (Cumru Township) (V)  
Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority, Alternate  
Kevin Barnhardt, Reading Regional Airport Authority  
Commissioner Michael Rivera, County of Berks  
Mike Kocher, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Townships (Spring Township) (V)  
Brian Hoffa, Boroughs (Sinking Spring) (V)

\*Tie-breaking vote only  
(V) Attended Virtually

COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Tim Krall, City of Reading (V)  
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary  
David Alas, PennDOT Central (V)  
Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority  
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0, Acting Chair\*  
Kyle Zeiber, City of Reading  
Zachary Tempesco, Reading Regional Airport Authority

OTHERS

Amanda Leindecker, PennDOT 5-0 (V)  
Matthew Boyer, Commuter Services of PA  
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0 (V)  
Carol Riley  
Felipe Melendez  
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission  
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission  
David Hunter, Berks County Planning Commission  
Matthew McGough, Berks County Planning Commission

Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission  
Heather Berger, Berks County Information Systems  
IS Production, Berks County Information Systems (V)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rebert called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

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

3. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF JANUARY 5, 2023

Chairman Rebert asked if there were any questions or comments on the January 5, 2023 Technical Committee minutes.

MOTION (Technical): Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to approve the January 5, 2023 Technical Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING OF JANUARY 19, 2023

Chairman Rebert asked if there were any questions or comments on the January 19, 2023 Coordinating Committee minutes.

MOTION (Coordinating): Mr. Barnhardt made a motion to approve the January 19, 2023 Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Leindecker gave an update on PennDOT's requested Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from December 30, 2022 to March 2, 2023.

- There are six (6) 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 is one (1) Amendment – this adjustment deals with removal of the Albright College TASA project from the TIP and reallocation of those funds back to the regional TAP reserve line item.

- There are five (5) Statewide Administrative Actions – these adjustments deal with reallocation of funds for revised estimates and the addition of Carbon Reduction funds to the regional Urban reserve line item.
- There is one (1) Statewide Amendment – this adjustment deals with adding an approved HSIP funded VRU project to the TIP.

Mr. Piper stated that Albright College no longer wanted to pursue the project because the project was small and the federal requirements outweighed the efforts for the size of the project. Those funds would return to the MPO’s TAP line item. The MPO and PennDOT are currently working with Cumru Township on a project that initially was submitted but ultimately was not funded during the last TASA application round. If the Cumru Township project can be developed and meet the requirements for TASA, the project can be funded using the funds in the TAP Reserve Line Item. Prior to the Cumru project receiving TASA funds, the project will be discussed and brought back to this Committee for approval to add the project to the TIP.

Chairman Rebert stated that the funds remaining in the Line Item should be allocated to a project in order to not lose them. Ms. Leindecker confirmed that the funds in the Line Item need to be assigned to a project before the end of the FFY and can be obligated in FFY 2024.

MOTION (Technical): Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend the removal of the Albright College project from the FFY 2023-2026 TIP and reallocate the funds to the TAP Reserve Line Item. Mr. Alas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION (Coordinating): Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the removal of the Albright College project from the FFY 2023-2026 TIP and reallocate the funds to the TAP Reserve Line Item. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### 6. REPORT ON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION 2023 PERFORMANCE REPORT AND 12-YEAR PROGRAM UPDATE OUTREACH

Mr. Piper stated that every two years, the State Transportation Commission (STC) begins the process to update its 12-Year Program (TYP). The initiation of their update also corresponds to and begins the update to RATS TIP.

As part of the State’s TYP update, they develop a Transportation Performance Report Scorecard that identifies the progress the State has made in several categories related to the overall goals in their TYP. The categories include:

- Safety – addresses the goal of reducing fatalities and injuries on Pennsylvania roadways
- Mobility – addresses the goal of maintaining the current highway system, optimizing the performance of the existing system, and managing travel demand.
- Preservation – addresses maintenance of roadways and bridges to preserve transportation assets

- Accountability – addresses the management of resources and business processes
- Freight – addresses improving the safe and efficient movement of goods across Pennsylvania

Each category identifies various indicators and provides a description, performance rating, and identifies the trend for each indicator. Mr. Piper reviewed the STC Performance Report Scorecard.

Mr. Piper stated that as part of the STC’s TYP update, the 2023 Public Outreach Campaign began on March 1, 2023 and ends on April 30, 2023. There is an online survey ([www.survey.talkpatransportation.com](http://www.survey.talkpatransportation.com)) that asks the public for its opinion on the areas where funds should be invested. There is also an interactive map that the public can identify specific areas where transportation improvements are necessary. The data is collected on a statewide level and then filtered by the various MPOs across the state. The state then shares the information with the MPOs providing the findings for the area.

Also within the public comment period, there is an online public forum on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM which provides the state an opportunity to review the scorecard with the public, answer questions, and solicit additional comments.

Mr. Piper stated that staff will be conducting outreach for this material to municipalities and the public in an effort to garner as much feedback as possible.

## 7. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF UPDATED READING MPO TITLE VI PROGRAM

Mr. Golembiewski stated that RATS adopted the initial FTA compliant Title VI Program back in July, 2021. The Title VI Program is required to be compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act prohibits discrimination within any federally funded program against race, color, or national origin. There are 13 specific requirements that FTA requires the MPO to have in place to ensure nondiscrimination. Some of those 13 requirements include notices to the public and where they are posted, formal complaint procedures, development and adoption of a public participation plan, and development and adoption of a limited English proficiency plan. All the requirements are then incorporated into one document which is the Title VI Program Plan.

Staff has reviewed and updated the RATS Title VI Program after identifying some improvements that should be made to the plan. The most notable improvements include adding language taglines to the front of the document, updating and adding web links, updating MPO Board membership and associated member demographics, and updating content and links related to the FFY 2023-2026 TIP and FFY 2023 Environmental Justice documentation. The updated draft plan was submitted to PennDOT’s Bureau of Equal Opportunity (BEO). FTA requires PennDOT’s BEO to ensure that all transit agencies and planning regions maintain their Title VI Program Plans. PennDOT is considered the main recipient of federal funds and the MPOs are subrecipients. This is why PennDOT oversees this program for us. PennDOT BEO endorsed the proposed revisions.

The document was also sent to FTA and FHWA. Neither agency had any comments to address in this plan. While these changes are administrative and don't require MPO adoption, we'd still like to formally have the plan adopted with these changes.

MOTION (Technical): Mr. Alas made a motion to recommend approval of the updated Reading Area Transportation Study Title VI Program plan. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION (Coordinating): Ms. Reed made a motion to adopt the updated Reading Area Transportation Study Title VI Program plan. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF ADOPTION OF PENNDOT PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR PM-2 (PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS) AND PM-3 (TRAVEL RELIABILITY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) PROGRAM)

Mr. Piper stated that this process to adopt performance measure standards and targets is performed annually. The MPO has the option to accept the state recommended set of performance measures or develop its own targets.

The Performance Measures for pavement and bridge conditions (PM-2) include:

- Percentage of pavements on the Interstate System in Good condition
- Percentage of pavements on the Interstate System in Poor condition
- Percentage of pavements on the NHS (excluding the Interstate System) in Good condition
- Percentage of pavements on the NHS (excluding the Interstate System) in Poor condition
- Percentage of NHS bridge deck area classified as in Good condition
- Percentage of NHS bridge deck area classified as in Poor condition

The Performance Measures for travel reliability and the effectiveness of the congestion mitigation and air quality (CMAQ) program (PM-3) include:

- Percent of Person-miles Traveled on the Interstate System that are Reliable
- Percent of Person-miles Traveled on the Non-Interstate NHS that are Reliable
- Interstate System Truck Travel Time Reliability Index
- Annual Hours of Peak-Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) per Capita
- Percent Non-Single Occupant Vehicle (SPOV) Travel
- On-Road Mobile Source Emissions Reduction for CMAQ-funded Projects

As in the past, the recommendation to the Committee is that we do not create our own Performance Measures targets but rather that we vote to adopt the PennDOT Performance Measure targets for each of these categories.

MOTION (Technical): Mr. Krall made a motion to recommend adoption of PennDOT's PM-2 and PM-3 Performance Measures and targets. Mr. Alas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION (Coordinating): Mr. Barnhardt made a motion to adopt PennDOT's PM-2 and PM-3 Performance Measures and targets. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

## 9. UPDATE ON EASTERN PA FREIGHT PLAN

Mr. Piper stated that a briefing from the consultants for the Eastern PA Freight Plan was prepared and presented to the participating MPOs on March 2, 2023. The Eastern PA Freight Alliance consists of the RATS MPO, Lebanon MPO, Lehigh Valley MPO, NEPA MPO, and Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO. Using PennDOT and MPO funding, the Alliance hired a group of consultants led by WSP that is developing the freight plan for the region.

The Plan is divided into 9 tasks. Currently, the consultants are approximately half-way through the development of the plan. The consultants have gathered a lot of data for the region. One of the categories that will have a great impact on freight movement throughout the region is the annual average daily truck traffic. Primarily, the Interstate highways show the greatest amount of truck traffic. Interstate 78 carries some of the highest truck traffic of any highway through the area. There are similar volumes on portions of I-80 and I-81. When looking at the rest of the area excluding the Interstate system, what really stands out is the fact that the Route 222 corridor from Lancaster through Reading into the Lehigh Valley, Route 22 to Easton, and Route 33 corridor are the primary non-Interstate truck corridors through the area.

The consultants also examined data relating to bridges and where weight restrictions are located that could influence freight movement and delivery. Pavement conditions were also evaluated. Truck crashes were examined and determined that the heaviest concentrations of truck crashes were along Route 22 and I-78 with some additional clusters in Allentown, Reading, and Lebanon.

The consultants examined the truck congestion costs for the region related to the hourly truck operating cost versus the unreliability of a link and the daily cost per mile. By evaluating the costs, the consultants identified 'high cost' corridors throughout the region.

The consultants are also examining freight rail data including regional and national potential connections. In addition, the consultants will contact airports regarding freight movements through their facilities.

The next steps the consultants will begin include finalizing a land use analysis, developing online mapping, performing focused outreach, identifying freight trends and forecasts, and identifying needs and deficiencies through profile data, Steering Committee input, and public input.

Chairman Rebert noted that developing a freight plan like this provides reinforcement for applications to receive discretionary funds pending their availability.

#### 10. UPDATE ON SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

Mr. Piper state that the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA) is preparing an application for the Corridor Identification Program through the Federal Rail Administration (FRA). The FRA should determine and announce eligibility decisions later this summer. If this project is selected to be included in the initial funding phase, the Authority would move on to the next step which includes project planning. The Authority would receive approximately \$500,000 to fund the development of a project plan from the FRA. Through the development of a project plan, a scope of work and schedule could be developed which would aid in the development of a more detailed study for the corridor itself. The third phase of the Corridor Identification Program funding would be the project implementation phase. The SRPRA plans to submit their application next week. As more details emerge, this Committee will be updated on the status of this project.

#### 11. MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT, BRIDGE STATUS REPORT AND TASA/MTF PROJECT STATUS REPORT

Mr. Piper gave an update on the status of major projects. The bridge status report and the TASA/MTF project status report are available.

Mr. Piper noted that there was recently an article in the newspaper regarding the closing of the Funk Road bridge in Colebrookdale Township. The bridge project was already on the FFY 2023-2026 TIP to begin the preliminary engineering. The design phase is currently scheduled for sometime next year. Mr. Piper is working with the Planning and Programming PennDOT staff to try to expedite the schedule for the Funk Road bridge project.

Chairman Rebert is working with his bridge engineers to hopefully identify an interim solution for the Funk Road bridge.

Mr. Piper stated that PennDOT just announced that construction is underway for the reconstruction of the Gibraltar Road bridge in Exeter Township.

#### 12. COMMUTER SERVICES UPDATE

The outreach staff continues to meet with groups, individuals, and businesses. The outreach team has been in contact with Albright College, BARTA, Berks Community Foundation, and Morgan Truck Body. Commuter Services continues to hold events at different locations including Ashley Furniture, Berks Connections, Berks Fire and Water, PA Career Link in Berks, and the UPS facility in Reading.

Commuter Services continues work to develop a regional bike share. Earth Day is coming up in April and Bike to Work week in May in which Commuter Services promotes green trips and the regional bike share program.

Commuter Services is working with various businesses to bring back the Bike to Work week ride which would happen on Friday, May 19. Commuter Services is working with West Reading and the City of Reading to also do a ride that would bring riders through the suburban area into the City, onto the trail system, and back out of the City.

During the month of February, 106 new members joined the program, over 7,000 trips were tracked, and over 133,000 miles not driven were recorded for a savings of over \$83,000 as a result of using green modes of transportation.

Commuter Services provided a year end report titled Innovating Mobility Options. The report discusses the outreach conducted and the successes resulting from the outreach.

The SRTP is in the preliminary stages of preparing an application to send to PennDOT for TASA funding for the Safe Routes to School Program. Mr. Boyer asked the Committee if there is any type of secondary process with the MPO that is required as part of the application process. Mr. Piper responded that he will reach out to PennDOT and get back to Mr. Boyer. Mr. Tobin noted that the discussion today regarding this particular application item would be for the drawn down from the statewide allocation to be included in the local allocation.

### 13. OTHER BUSINESS

- **Cumru Township TASA Project** – Mr. Kalbach gave an update on the potential TASA project for Cumru Township involving flood mitigation from the Museum Road and Lancaster Avenue intersection. The Township is working with local landowners in the vicinity in an effort to acquire some land for flood mitigation via construction of a retention basin. The Township engineer is developing a plan combining a below ground and an above ground retention basin plan so that the local landowner can retain partial use of the property.
- **SCTA Transit Development Plan Update** – Mr. Boatman stated that the kickoff meeting for the SCTA Transit Development Plan (TDP) update was on November 4, 2022. SCTA hired Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning Inc. to help develop the TDP. Surveys were conducted on the buses in January 2023. SCTA received 585 surveys back from those on bus surveys that were handed out. A stakeholder meeting was held on January 25, 2023, an in-person public meeting was held on January 25, 2023 as well. There were 12 participants at the stakeholders meeting. There were 6 participants at the public meeting. There was a virtual public meeting on February 2, 2023. There were 17 participants at the virtual public meeting. SCTA conducted an online community survey in which 171 responses were received in English and 5 were received in Spanish. All of the survey responses are being analyzed by Foursquare and they will provide SCTA with the analysis of the responses. SCTA is currently conducting outreach and having conversations with Shared-ride providers to identify their needs and the needs of their customers. SCTA is sending out 600 customer satisfaction surveys to the current shared-ride customers. SCTA is also starting the diagnostic route



profile analysis which will analyze service scenarios to ensure the right services are provided in the right locations. SCTA is also analyzing the feasibility of providing microtransit which would be more of an on-demand service similar to how Uber and Lyft provide service. The next public meeting is anticipated sometime in the beginning of the summer of 2023.

- Mr. Rivera stated that he received an email from a resident in Berks County that is concerned with the amount of trash on the roadways. Mr. Rivera asked if anything can be done about the amount of trash along the roadways. Chairman Rebert noted the difficulties in maintaining roadway cleanliness especially during a year with limited snowfall. Chairman Rebert noted the ability to clean up along roadways is dependent upon the resources available to PennDOT and identified usually those locations that require roadside trash pick up are generally in high traffic corridors that affect timing for debris cleanup. PennDOT maintenance crews are preparing to conduct night shift cleanup along roadways. PennDOT maintenance crews will also begin to cleanup roadways between now and the springtime in areas where traffic will not be impacted by their presence during the daytime. PennDOT District 5-0 is examining the possibility of hiring contractors to perform some of the roadway cleanup because PennDOT maintenance alone can not keep up with litter cleanup along all the state owned roadways across the Commonwealth.
- Ms. Reed stated that next week is the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary week of the City of Reading.
- Ms. Riley expressed concerns about Railroad Street in the City of Reading. Mr. Krall stated that Railroad Street is a private street. He will coordinate with the City of Reading public works staff to communicate and coordinate with the property owners to address any possible issues.

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Alan D. Piper