

**RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #6
NOVEMBER 17, 2025, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Attendance:

Amanda Timochenko (BCPC staff)	Michael Donchez (PennDOT District 5-0)
Michael Golembiewski (BCPC staff)	Christopher Kufro (PennDOT District 5-0)
Lawrence Peterson (PennDOT District 5-0)	Lisha Rowe (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member, Cumru Twp. Commissioner)
Lauri Ahlskog (South Central Transit Auth.)	Ed Burns (Burns Logistics)
Scott Vottero (PennDOT District 5-0)	David Mattes (BCPC Board Member)
Nick Raio (PennDOT Central Office)	Alan Piper (BCPC staff)
Alex Roche (Greater Reading Chamber Alliance)	Devon Hain (BCPC staff)
Ron Young (PennDOT District 5-0)	Pamela Menet (Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority)
Zackary Tempesco (Reading Regional Airport)	Matthew McGough (BCPC staff)
Ashley Showers (Berks County Planning Commission)	Elaine Schaeffer (Schuylkill River National Heritage Area)
Ronnique Bishop (Federal Highway Admin.)	

Meeting Notes:

Ms. Timochenko started the meeting at 1:02 PM. She welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Ms. Timochenko mentioned that staff members would review their draft sections with the Steering Committee. She introduced Mr. McGough to review the Congestion Management Process (CMP) for Berks County. Some items of note included:

- The CMP is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) based on an Urban Area population >200,000 persons
- It evaluates 33 corridors in the County and helps to feed projects into the LRTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- He described the factors used to evaluate the corridors
- Included in the LRTP is a table showing the 'Top 10' most congested corridors based on Travel Time Index (TTI)
 - SR 3023 State Hill Rd. had the highest TTI and is, therefore, considered the most 'congested'
- The CMP is reviewed every two (2) years, with one result being a demonstration of how projects – once completed – affect congestion
- The CMP was just updated and approved in November, 2025

Ms. Menet requested clarification on what determines “congestion”; is it volume or Travel Time Index (TTI)? Mr. McGough explained that TTI is a measure of actual travel times vs. expected times based on ‘free flow’ conditions. Actual traffic volumes may be higher on certain roadways, but if the roadway has the capacity (freeway vs. local, for example) then higher volumes may be able to be accommodated. TTI is a more realistic measure of actual conditions vs. just traffic volumes.

Ms. Showers asked if any mapping of the ‘Top 10 Congested Corridors’ was available. Mr. McGough replied that a countywide map of the corridors is included in the LRTP and the individual corridor maps are available in the recently approved Congestion Management Process.

Next, Ms. Hain described the ‘Roads and Bridges’ section. This section describes the physical condition of the roadway and bridge system, with overviews by several descriptors including Functional Class, National Highway System status, Intermodal Connectors, Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (DVMT), and ownership. Several maps are included which give graphic representation of many of those attributes. Additional attributes of the system discussed include International Roughness Index (IRI), Bridge Deck Condition, and ownership (local vs. state). Charts showing the number of Licensed Drivers in Berks County were also shared. Additional road and bridge information is found in the *RATS Annual Pavement and Bridge Condition Report, 2020-2024* that was adopted by the MPO in November 2025. The annual report helps guide investment decisions through identification and analysis of Berks County roads and bridges and aids in determining potential projects for inclusion in the RATS TIP and LRTP.

Mr. Donchez requested several text clarifications including:

- Explaining that the percentage of roads (by various factors) should be described by roadway mileage, not the number of roads
- Bridge inspections are completed on a two (2)-year cycle at a minimum, with increased frequency as needed
- The Traffic Volume map appears to have several roadways showing low volumes. (STAFF NOTE: It was later determined that incomplete volumes were shown on many of the divided highways in the County, as only a single direction of volume was captured by GIS. These discrepancies will be fixed by staff).

Ms. Timochenko reviewed the ‘Issues and Needs’ section next. This can be considered a brief synopsis of the many challenges that face the transportation system in Berks County. All the items discussed in this section are further expanded upon throughout the document. The issues and needs discussed were wide-ranging in scope including: current federal funding legislation and the need for reauthorization in the next fiscal year; safety and modernization of the transportation system; crashes and young drivers; the installation of roundabouts which are a federal proven safety countermeasure; truck parking; increases in truck and freight movement

locally and regionally; maintenance of the system, both state and local roads and bridges; strategic capacity improvements; increase in Alternative Fuels vehicles and road user charges; automated vehicles; electric micromobility; passenger rail restoration, aviation and the Reading Regional Airport; and funding for local bridges.

Ms. Showers asked how these issues and needs were identified. Ms. Timochenko explained how they came about through public comments, federal and state mandates, and in completing the background sections of the draft LRTP that analyzes data relating to these issues and needs.

Ms. Schaeffer described how the need for investments in nonmotorized transportation should include investments in the multi-county trail system, specifically the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT). Staff acknowledged the role that the SRT plays in the countywide trail system for both recreation and transportation. Mr. Piper further offered that the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DRVPC) will make funding available for trail needs outside of their planning area, beginning in 2026. Sections of the trail in Berks County would be considered eligible for DVRPC funding.

Mr. Golembiewski discussed the 'Amendment Procedures' section next. Though only a few pages, this section needed to be updated. It describes the processes that must be followed for formal changes to the LRTP. Mr. Piper noted that there has only ever been one LRTP amendment. That was for a Transit project, and that was many years ago. There are two (2) types of formal changes that can occur to the LRTP:

- Administrative Modification happens when a minor change in the project is equal or less than ten (10) percent of the total project/phase cost; adding a new phase or changing the timing of a listed project that would move it from one time band to another, if that movement does not affect air quality conformity determination.
- Plan Amendment is a major revision to the LRTP. Actions that could warrant an Amendment include but are not limited to:
 - Adding a new project where no phases of the project are listed
 - A change in any project that affects its Air Quality significance
 - Deleting projects from the plan
 - Significant changes to project costs (greater than 10% of the project or phase cost), start dates (which may require an updated air quality conformity determination), or design concepts and scopes (eg., changing project termini, changing the number of traffic through lanes) for existing projects.

Mr. Golembiewski questioned Ms. Bishop (FHWA) regarding the second bullet point under the Administrative Modification section (*Identification of planned use of federal funds for the existing cost feasible plan projects if federal funds are not initially programed for a project but are added to a project funded with only state or local funds in the adopted LRTP*). Mr. Porochniak (FHWA) had requested clarification on this point. Mr. Golembiewski responded that the bullet point

should probably be removed and requested final guidance from Ms. Bishop. She responded that she would speak with Mr. Porochniak and get back to us.

Mr. Golembiewski explained that Administrative Modifications do not require any type of formal public involvement, but Plan Amendments have public involvement requirements that must follow the MPO's *Public Participation Plan*. If the proposed Amendment could potentially have an adverse air quality conformity impact, there is a separate process that must be undertaken – including the issuance of a Conformity Report. A Conformity Report must be included with the public input documents and approved by the MPO prior to submitting to various federal agencies for their approval. It was noted that Plan Amendments will:

- Require an update to the revenue and cost estimates supporting the plan to use an inflation rate(s) to reflect year of expenditure dollars, based on reasonable financial principles and information. These estimates must demonstrate that the change preserves the financial feasibility of the plan.
- Provide a purpose and need for the change. This should include supporting data and analysis.
- Determine if a proposed project is Air Quality (AQ) significant. The proposed project will be submitted to the PA Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) for that determination and, if so determined to be AQ significant, perform the required travel demand and air quality conformity modeling and prepare the requisite *Air Quality Conformity Report*.
- Follow a public involvement period consistent with the *RATS Public Participation Plan*. This includes review of the full draft proposal and the *Air Quality Conformity Report* (if required), followed by a 30-day public input period. Staff will review and respond to any comments received, and then the amendment will be adopted by a recorded majority vote of the RATS Coordinating Committee at a publicly advertised meeting.

Next, Mr. Piper described the Project Development Process. He reviewed the detailed process of updating and funding the draft FFY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and draft FFY 2027-2050 LRTP. He reviewed the various projects, costs, funding, and issues facing many of the projects. It was noted that this draft TIP is “maintaining the status-quo”, meaning most projects are carrying-over from the current FFY 2025-2028 TIP, with very few new projects being added but several changes to existing projects were occurring. One item of note is the additional \$335,000/year Urban funding from DRVPC resulting from the Census defined Philadelphia Urban Area extending into Berks County. Mr. Piper then discussed several individual projects.

The LRTP is not about only roadways and bridges. Staff consulted with South Central Transit Authority (SCTA) regarding their 20-year Capital Improvements Program. That Program will be incorporated into the LRTP. Similarly, the Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan for the Reading Regional Airport will also be incorporated.

Ms. Timochenko mentioned that TIP updates include projects derived from the LRTP. There are three (3) time frames that are used with these related documents:

- TIP = Short Term in the LRTP (first 4 years)
- TYP = Mid Term (next 8 years), part of the state's Twelve-Year Program (TYP)
- Late = The final 8 years and beyond of the LRTP

The final topic of discussion by Ms. Timochenko was related to our Next Steps:

- Presenting the draft LRTP, including the draft project list, at the quarterly Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM) on December 10th. ACM is a group of environmental related organizations, PennDOT representatives, Federal Highway Administration representatives and other MPOs that review items such as specific high impact projects and draft MPO LRTPs to identify potential environmental impacts to natural resources, agricultural lands, and historic resources. ACM reviews the draft LRTP against those resources and looks to see if we missed anything within our analysis that may need to be addressed. The overall goal is to avoid those resources and, if they cannot be avoided, look to mitigate any effects to them.
- Planning our next meeting. Presently the next scheduled meeting would be held on February 16, 2026. That happens to be the President's Day Holiday when MPO staff would not be available. After discussion it was decided to move the next scheduled meeting to Monday February 9, 2026, starting at 1:00 p.m.
- Discussing the possibility of an interim Steering Committee meeting in January. After discussion it was decided that an additional meeting would be held on January 26, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.
- A link to the final formatted draft LRTP would be provided to all Steering Committee members on or before February 26, 2026.

Ms. Timochenko asked for any additional comments or questions. Hearing none she thanked everyone for their time and input. The meeting concluded at 2:32 PM.

*Prepared by,
Michael D. Golembiewski
Transportation Modeler*

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION