

DRAFT
READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN-PERSON AND
VIRTUALLY MAY 15, 2025

ATTENDANCE

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Chris Kufro, PennDOT District Executive, Chair*
Raymond Green, PennDOT Program Center (V)
Tom McKeon, Berks County Planning Commission (V)
Lisha Rowe, 1st Class Townships (Cumru Township) (V)
Commissioner Michael Rivera, County of Berks
Dante Santoni, Jr., Reading Regional Airport Authority
Donna Reed, City of Reading
Brian Hoffa, Boroughs (Sinking Spring) (V)
Arthur Lambert, 2nd Class Townships (Upper Bern Township)
Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority (representing Greg Downing) (V)

*Tie-breaking vote only
(V) Attended Virtually

OTHERS

Michael Donchez, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
Nick Raio, PennDOT Central (V)
Ronnique Bishop, FHWA (V)
Matthew Boyer, CommutePA (V)
Nyomi Nonnemaker, PennDOT Central (V)
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0 (V)
Lynne Burns (V)
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission
David Hunter, Berks County Planning Commission (V)
Matthew McGough, Berks County Planning Commission (V)
Melissa Lewis, Berks County Information Systems
Heather Berger, Berks County Information Systems (V)
Carl Long, Berks County Information Systems

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 20, 2025 COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Kufro asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 20, 2025 Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

MOTION: Ms. Reed made a motion to approve the March 20, 2025 Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Boatman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2025-2028 TIP

Mr. Donchez gave an update on PennDOT's requested Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from February 27, 2025 to April 23, 2025.

- There were seven (7) Administrative Actions – the adjustments address such things as an increase to recent cost estimates, increase for supplement to complete phase I archeology that was not in the original scope of work, increase for the renewal of the freeway service patrol, increase to cover funds advanced constructed from the 2023 TIP, increases to add signalization at Hawk Ridge Road Extension / 4th Street intersection of the SR 61 (15M) project, increase to cover negotiated agreement amount plus internal costs, and increase for supplement to address potential realignment of existing roadway and surrounding cultural resource impacts.
- There were no Statewide Administration Actions
- There were two (2) Interstate Management Administration Actions – the adjustments included an increase to extend the limits of repaving by one-half mile for the I-78 Shartlesville to Hamburg resurfacing project. The second action involves adding final design, right-of-way, and construction to the 2025 TIP program for the I-78/Grimes Interchange Removal Project.

None of the modifications presented in the chart adversely affect the project delivery schedules or air quality conformity.

Mr. Piper added that he wanted to clarify that the project to add signalization at the Hawk Ridge Road Extension / 4th Street is a part of the SR 61(15M) Hamburg project that will be proceeding next year and involves reconstructing the intersection between Route 61 /4th Street / Hawk Ridge Road extension that will ultimately connect to Route 61 at the south end of Hamburg Borough as well as installing median barrier on SR 61, from 4th Street south to Zion's Church Road.

5. UPDATE ON FY 2025 – 2027 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Mr. Piper presented that earlier this year the committee locally approved the FY 2025 - 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It was then submitted to PennDOT which in turn forwarded it to USDOT for their final review and approval which was received. PennDOT has incorporated the approved UPWP into RATS' proposed work order #3. This work order will cover the next two years' worth of funding for RATS. This is the agreement between Berks County and PennDOT for funding RATS. It has been locally executed and sent back to PennDOT for their final review and approval. Staff anticipates that there will be no issues with the final approval. We should get the final approval shortly so that the agreement can go into effect beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027.

Mr. Piper had one other issue to address regarding the UPWP. It relates to the process that the MPO must go through with PennDOT in order to justify fringe costs and overheads. Known as the *Indirect Cost Allocation Plan*, Mr. Piper informed the committee that staff has worked with the County's budget department to prepare the necessary documentation staff needed to submit it to PennDOT. Staff is still waiting on two more attachments that will come from the County at a later date. Once completed these will be sent to PennDOT for review and approval. At that time, staff will be able to update our fringe and indirect costs to reflect the new rates.

6. UPDATE ON FFY 2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROCESS

Mr. Piper provided an update on the 2027 TIP process. He advised the committee that the State Transportation Commission (STC) started its 12-year program update process, which coincides with the start of the local TIP program. The STC held their public meeting in the beginning of April and the public comment period was open through March 30th. Staff heavily advertised and promoted the public comment period and survey to the public. Staff also worked with the County's Human Resources Office to distribute the survey to all county employees. Mr. Piper stated it was important to promote the public input period because we are all aware of how important it is from a transportation planning perspective, but also because what comes out of the STC's public comment period will come back to staff with survey responses received as they relate to Berks County.

In addition to the STC public comment period, Mr. Piper provided a financial guidance spreadsheet and added that the financial guidance workgroup was also meeting. They have circulated preliminary dollar amounts that relate to highway and bridges. Mr. Piper stated that based on the draft state highway and bridge numbers that staff has seen, there are some minor reductions in estimated funding. These numbers are based on formulas that are used to create a level playing field across the state in terms of allocating dollar amounts distributed to MPOs/RPOs in the state. These formulas are based on demographic data with regions that have had population growth getting more funding. In the case of Berks County, the population has remained stagnant. Because of this, Mr. Piper advised the committee that the region is down about 3.6% or \$9M over the TIP period. Mr. Piper stated that this is probably a good indicator that we are only going to be able to have nominal additions to the TIP as we move into the project development phases, if the dollar figures remain the same as the

preliminary numbers. Mr. Piper added that the projections were only done for the first four years.

The federal funding numbers are subject to a flat line based on the fact that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expires at the end of FFY 2026.

Mr. Kufro asked a question regarding the growth of the population in Berks County. He questioned if the County is just not growing as fast as the surrounding counties or is it negative population growth? Mr. Piper stated that in Berks County, in terms of population growth, is stable. If the County does not grow in population, then it is one of those cases where you are falling behind in the allocation of transportation dollars. This is where the reduction in our proposed allocation is coming from.

Mr. Piper added that one of the good things with this program is that over the course of the last 10 years every MPO in the State has been transferring an increasing portion of its federal funding to the Statewide Interstate Program to help the program reach a \$1B limit. That agreement to continue shifting funding over to the Interstate Program only applies to federal fiscal years 2027 and 2028. Mr. Piper continued that the MPO has been losing federal funds in each of those years but we've known that. Starting in FFY 2029 and moving forward that dollar amount will finally stabilize and not continue to shrink.

Mr. Piper stated that it will be interesting to see how this all plays out over time and in the federal budgets that are coming out. The current legislation (IIJA) only goes through the end of FFY 2026 so staff is making federal assumptions based on zero federal growth right now. Staff will have to see if there are any changes coming out of Washington, D.C. that will ultimately change the quantity and allowed uses for the federal dollars received.

Mr. Piper then presented the transit numbers. Overall, there was a modest gain compared to the last Transit TIP numbers. Mr. Piper asked Mr. Keith Boatman (BARTA/SCTA representative) if this was representative of what BARTA has interpreted from the numbers. Mr. Boatman confirmed that they are. Mr. Piper stated that it looks as though the numbers for the transit TIP were increased about 2% overall. Normally these transit numbers are a guide to start but continue to evolve and the actual numbers are based on the annual obligations.

Mr. Piper finished his presentation by informing the committee that once staff gets closer to finalizing the numbers for the four-year and 12-year programs, staff will report back later this summer or early fall. At that time staff will begin meeting with PennDOT District 5-0 to start reviewing our plan and putting together the actual project updates that go along with it.

7. UPDATE ON FFY 2027 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ms. Timochenko presented a slide deck on the status of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. Ms. Timochenko continued that staff has been conducting public outreach efforts to gather input on issues and needs. Ms. Timochenko presented the slides and informed the committee of what has been presented at the public meetings. The public presentations have included: A brief overview of both the Technical and Coordinating

committees, what the LRTP is, the Federal planning factors that must be implemented through the LRTP, and a summary of the public outreach schedule starting in 2024 and continuing through 2025, the updated LRTP Vision Statement, and updated Goals and Objectives.

Ms. Timochenko continued that the most important part of the public outreach was to gather input on what transportation issues the public is currently experiencing. The discussions were focused around six items shown on one of the slides (Bicycle, Pedestrian, Public Transportation, Aviation, Bridge, and Highway). A brief discussion on the relationship between the LRTP and the TIP was also performed. Based on where the meetings were being held staff included a TIP project map for the 2025-2028 TIP project list for that region. A map of the major TIP projects like the 422/WSB project and 222 Corridor were presented and discussed. A link to and discussion about the STC 12-Year Program Update Survey was presented to the attendees.

Mr. Piper added that one item he forgot to mention in the TIP discussion was that on Monday May 5th staff sent out a survey to all of the County's municipalities so that they can submit considerations for project recommendations. The due date for the return of the survey is June 17th. Mr. Piper continued that anything that comes out of the survey that cannot be considered in the TIP will be considered for the LRTP.

Ms. Timochenko then informed the committee that the next LRTP Steering Committee will be held on May 19th from 1PM until 2:30PM. At this meeting the outcomes from the public meetings will be shared with the steering committee as well as the review of the aviation, passenger rail, rail freight, and non-motorized sections of the LRTP update.

Ms. Timochenko continued that next steps in this process will include a review of the STC survey results, the development of an online web-based map portal to report transportation issues, and continued review of updated text section including Safety, Security and Transit. Ms. Timochenko finished the presentation by displaying a slide that included a summary of the transportation comments that came from our initial public outreach process.

8. REVIEW AND ENDORSEMENT OF SCTA FY 2025-26 CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR THE READING URBAN AREA

Mr. Boatman presented that SCTA/BARTA is the designated recipient of the federal Section 5307 and 5339 funds apportioned to the Reading Urbanized Area. As the designated recipient and based on federal guidelines, SCTA/BARTA is required to draft a Program of Projects identifying the proposed projects to be advanced with the appropriate funds. Mr. Boatman continued that the projects SCTA/BARTA is looking at advancing for the next federal fiscal year include, ADA services, the purchase of some fixed ride and shared ride buses, public transportation agency plan development, facilities and equipment rehabilitation, and the purchase of some fare collection equipment to upgrade the fixed route buses making customer service more efficient.

Mr. Boatman added that these capital projects will be presented to the SCTA/BARTA Board on May 21st. The board will give formal approval to send out the proposal for public comment and there will be a public hearing held on Monday June 16th at the SCTA/BARTA office at 1700 North Eleventh Street in the City of Reading. There will also be a virtual option for attendees that cannot make it in person. Once all of these steps are taken, SCTA/BARTA staff will present the outcomes at the June SCTA/BARTA Board meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Santoni made a motion to endorse the SCTA FY 2025-26 Capital Projects for the Reading Urban Area. Ms. Reed seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

9. PENNDOT MAJOR PROJECT UPDATE

Chairman Kufro informed the committee and attendees that there are no major project updates. He added that at the next meeting on July 17th there will be presentations regarding the projects proposed along SR 12 in Alsace Township. Chairman Kufro continued that PennDOT has received some comments, questions and concerns from local residents and businesses regarding the SR 12 project. Because of these concerns the PennDOT design team assigned to the project will be meeting with concerned individuals at the Alsace Township municipal building on the evening of May 21st. Outcomes of that meeting will be discussed at the July 17th Coordinating Committee meeting.

10. COMMUTEPA UPDATE

Mr. Boyer presented that in April CommutePA had their Earth Month promotion where there were some neat health tracking mechanisms and competitions among program partners during the month. May is National Bike Month, so CommutePA is heavily involved in the activities associated with that. The Berks County Ride to Work event is going to be held tomorrow, May 16th. After the ride there will be bikes donated to two local police departments to aid in their community policing initiatives.

Mr. Boyer stated that outreach activities for the month include the Berks County Library System, Berks Heim, Double Tree Hotel, Berks CareerLink, Safe Berks, the County of Berks Health Fair, PSU Berks Earth Day activities, and the Sweet Street Desserts Health Fair. During the month of April there were 194 new people that joined the program, which is the highest of the year so far. Tracked over 10,000 trips, equating to over 196,000 miles taken off the roads because people decided to use the service as opposed to driving alone.

In parting, Mr. Boyer informed the committee that the last workshop meeting of the regional congestion management plan will be held on June 4th. At that time the hub portal will be turned over to the MPOs in the SRTP region. Lastly, Mr. Boyer informed the committee that CommutePA is doing market research and emails have been sent out. If you receive an email it is a legitimate one. The email outreach is intended to help convene focus groups to get opinions about what is good, bad, or indifferent about CommutePA's programs and services so that they can target enhancements and changes in the years ahead.

11. OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Piper updated the committee on additional outreach that staff is doing as part of the LRTP update. A request was received to meet with Council of the City of Reading at their Committee of the Whole meeting to be held on the evening of Monday, May 19th. At that meeting staff will review the LRTP and get any feedback that Council may have.

Mr. Piper presented that staff has started the process of updating the Federal Aid Functional Classification mapping and the National Highway System considerations that might go along with that. Mr. Piper informed Chairman Kufro that staff has done some internal work on this and ultimately would like to meet with PennDOT to go over the draft work that we have done prior to bringing the recommendations back to the MPO board for formal consideration. Mr. Piper stated that he is bringing it up so that everyone is aware that this is something staff is working on currently.

a. BCPC OFFICE MOVE AND FUTURE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Mr. Piper informed the committee that the Berks County Planning Commission has officially moved and is occupying space at 400 E Wyomissing Avenue, Mohnton, PA 19540. Mr. Piper presented a map of the new location so that committee members would be familiar with the area prior to holding Coordinating Committee meetings there in July, September and November.

Ms. Reed added that on Monday night (May 12th) City Council approved using a 6-month trial software (CITIAN) subscription service for crash data reporting and analyzation. The hope is for this software to make it easier for public works and the police department to analyze high crash areas in the City and determine ways to address the issues that may be causing the crashes.

There were no public comments.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Rivera made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Santoni seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 1:55PM.

Date: _____

Alan D. Piper
(MPO Secretary)