

**RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)**  
**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING #4**  
**PERRY TWP. BUILDING, OLEY HILLS REGION MEETING, OCTOBER 10, 2024**

Ms. Timochenko started the meeting at 6:15 PM. There were 2 attendees. She welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of the purpose for this meeting which is to review and gather public input on the Goals and Objectives of the current LRTP and revise them based on public input. She mentioned that specific projects will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

Ms. Timochenko next shared a PowerPoint presentation (see attachment at the end of these notes).

Ms. Timochenko described the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) and the Committee structure.

Ms. Timochenko explained what the Long Range Transportation (LRTP) is along with some of the necessary items to be included under federal requirements; planning horizon and update process; performance measures; and serving as the foundation for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The next few slides detailed the LRTP Plan Components by Chapter.

Chapter 1 is the Introduction. This provides the context for why the plan is done and its relationship with other federal, state, and local plans. The **Vision Statement** is included in this chapter: *The Reading Area Transportation Study will provide and maintain a balanced, multimodal transportation system that will safely and efficiently move goods and people.* The following comments were received:

- Ms. Timochenko – mentioned that we have received comments that the Vision Statement needs a few edits including replacing ‘provide’ with ‘promote’ as RATS does not provide the transportation system.
- Mr. Mattes – Is fine with Vision Statement.
- Mr. Anderson – Is happy that it covers the whole County, concerns with local infrastructure funding, larger/heavier truck lobbying that could quicken the deterioration of roads, large trucks traveling on local/back roads. \*Discussed funding allocations and condition/repair schedule of state vs local infrastructure, agreed with heavier trucks can cause quicker deterioration, and GPS apps that keep drivers off local roads.\*

Chapter 2 contains the background Information, including demographics, economics, environmental integration, and resiliency.

Chapter 3 is the State of the System. Individual sections examine Roads and Bridges, the Congestion Management Process, Safety and Security, Transit, Freight, Non-motorized Transportation, Aviation, and Issues & Needs.

Chapter 4 is the recommendations of the plan. These include Goals/Objectives/Strategic Performance Measures, Project Prioritization, Project & Financial Planning, Travel Demand Modeling, and Air Quality Conformity.

Contained in the Appendix is documentation of the Public Participation Process, Amendment Procedures, and detailed tables/descriptions of the Highway and Transit Program Funding assumptions and calculations.

There are ten (10) Federal Planning Factors that must be incorporated into the LRTP:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.

- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
- Enhance travel and tourism.

The LRTP must be consistent with state and local transportation plans and programs.

Ms. Timochenko introduced Goal #1: Keep Travelers safe and secure, no matter the mode of transportation. The five (5) Objectives attached to Goal #1 were also read. She asked for questions/comments regarding the Goal and Objectives.

- Mr. Anderson – Asked if there is a way to educate the public on how to travel differently/encourage use of transit \*Discussed carpooling and travel demand management programs.\* Expressed concern regarding high volume of DEKA employees using Main St. as well as local roads causing congestion in the borough and unsafe conditions due to volume on local roads driven to avoid congestion. \*Discussed BARTA service (Route 22) that runs to DEKA and Commute PA.\*

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #2: Maintain and improve the transportation system and services we enjoy today where financially feasible, then read the associated seven (7) Objectives. Ensuing discussion included:

- No comments.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #3: Invest in projects that strengthen the ability of Berks County commerce to access national and international trade markets and support regional economic development and tourism opportunities, then read the associated eight (8) Objectives. Ensuing discussion included:

- Mr. Mattes - Felt objectives for this goal were spot on.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #4: Give travelers a variety of well-designed transportation choices that are in good condition, then read the associated four (4) Objectives. Ensuing discussion included:

- Mr. Mattes – It is important for people to walk and bike. Expressed concern regarding lack of safe active transportation infrastructure along Green Valley Road developments to school and to Sheetz. \*Assured of inclusion in County Bike/Ped Plan, discussed Lower Heidelberg Townships issue/need to get residents safely to Blue Marsh Lake recreation areas without use of car and Lower Heidelberg Township's desire to complete an Active Transportation Plan looking ahead.\*
- Mr. Anderson – Concerns with developments in Maiden Creek Township that do not have sidewalks and all the residents that walk in the street. \*Discussed how sidewalk requirements are up to the municipalities. BCPC suggests that sidewalks are included during the review process. We state in Bike/Ped Plan that sidewalks should be included 2 miles around schools and .5 miles around bus stops. Discussed how the burden of sidewalks effects municipalities requiring them including developer deciding not to develop there and resident opposition to maintain.\*

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #5: Enhance the performance of the county transportation system in environmentally sustainable ways that increase resiliency to both climate change and vulnerability, then read the associated six (6) Objectives. She asked for questions/comments:

- Mr. Golembiewski – Regarding 1<sup>st</sup> objective: “Maintain and improve”.
- Mr. Mattes – Regarding Goal: take out the word sustainable, replace with friendly or another synonym.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed the anticipated LRTP development timeline:

- October 2023 – 30-month Kickoff Meeting
- July/August 2024 – Establish Steering Committee
- September/October 2024 – Public Outreach Meetings
- November 2024 – June 2025 – Gather background information.
- March-May 2025 – Gather public input on issues and needs (in coordination with State Transportation Commission [STC] public outreach on the State’s Twelve—Year Program Update)
- July 2025 – Review STC survey responses
- August-December 2025 – TIP and LRTP project meetings with PennDOT
- November/December 2025 – Present at Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM) meeting
- February 2026 – Complete Draft LRTP
- March/April 2026 – Begin 30-day public comment period and conduct public meetings.
- May 2026 – Response to comments
- May 2026 – Anticipated RATS Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Adoption
- September 2026 – Anticipated Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Slide #18 and asked the question: “If you could instantaneously make one change (big or small) to the transportation system without concern for cost or other potential obstacles, what would it be?”

Responses included:

- Mr. Anderson – 1: Get cars off the road. 2: Need mass transit, especially to Philadelphia, Allentown, and New York. 3: Reading Airport needs to expand service including flights to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.
- Mr. Mattes – Passenger rail to Philadelphia.

Ms. Timochenko asked for any final questions/comments, particularly related to roadways, bridges, or other transportation issues in the area that are considered problematic.

- Mr. Anderson – Asked about the tolling of the Lenhartsville Bridge on I-78. \*Informed him of how that was off the table and would not be a possibility.\*
- Mr. Mattes – 1: West Shore Bypass. \*Informed of website, discussed widening, bridges, on ramp from 176N to 422W, and multiple phases.\* 2: Sinking Spring Penn Avenue/724 intersection. \*Discussed progress.\* 3: Lancaster Avenue and Bingaman Street Bridge. \*Discussed planned projects including the reconfiguration of that interchange.\*

Hearing no other comments, Ms. Timochenko thanked the attendees for coming and their participation. The meeting concluded at 7:21 PM.