

**RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2
NOVEMBER 18, 2024, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Attendance:

Amanda Timochenko (BCPC staff)	Michael Donchez (PennDOT District 5-0)
Michael Golembiewski (BCPC staff)	Ed Burns (Burns Logistics Specialists)
Alan Piper (BCPC staff)	Lisha Rowe (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member)
Lauri Ahlskog (South Central Transit Auth.)	Nick Raio (PennDOT Central Office)
Scott Vottero (PennDOT District 5-0)	David Mattes (BCPC Board Member)
Alex Roche (Greater Reading Chamber Alliance)	Donna Reed (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member)
Keith Boatman (South Central Transit Auth.)	Elaine Schaefer (Schuylkill River Greenways NHA)
Ron Young (PennDOT District 5-0)	Kenana Zejcirovic (FHWA)
Ashley Showers (BCPC staff)	Matthew McGough (BCPC staff)
David Hunter (Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority)	Devon Hain (BCPC staff)
Nyomi Evans (PennDOT Central Office)	

Meeting Notes:

Ms. Timochenko started the meeting at 1:01 PM. She welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Ms. Timochenko began by reviewing six LRTP Public Outreach meetings. Four were held throughout the County between October 1 and October 10; one for eastern Berks on October 16th was cancelled due to lack of registration; and a virtual meeting was held on October 15th. In total there were 45 registrants (not including staff) and 25 actual participants. She reviewed the content of the public meetings and summarized the comments received. **(Editors Note: Comments received at the Public Meetings can be viewed in the meeting notes from each meeting.)**

Ms. Timochenko then reviewed the results of the Public Survey. Overall statistics regarding the returned surveys include:

- Roughly 1/3 telework to some extent, while those that did not primarily drove alone
 - Access and location were primary reasons to drive alone
- Congested roadways and lack of bicycle accommodations were primary concerns;
- Major roadways with specific concerns noted included PA 12 and PA 183, US 422 and US 222

It was noted that, at the meetings, most responses pertained to text changes for enhanced readability. Some of those changes included using common synonyms for more 'advanced' language i.e., Resiliency.

There were Survey responses regarding the Vision Statement. One notable response suggested switching the text position of 'goods' and 'people'.

Goal #1: Include an objective that references the need for Emergency Responder access? Define the 'modes' we consider within the Goal. Ms. Timochenko stated that future iterations of the Goals and Objectives will include efforts to make the transportation planning process more understandable to people that do not encounter it every day.

Goal #2: Ms. Timochenko led a discussion on funding and how it is allocated, including discretionary grants. Survey respondents noted that some goals and objectives seem contradictory. She explained how we work to achieve balance in funding and project selection.

Goal #3: Many respondents noted that this Goal is very wordy and suggested splitting into two separate goals; one focused on local/regional issues and one focused on more widespread issues. In the Chat, our FHWA representative agreed.

Goal #4: This was the least-commented on goal. A discussion regarding sidewalks in general, unconnected developments and unmaintained sidewalks occurred. While the LRTP clearly supports sidewalks, their placement is largely a function of mandates contained in municipal Land Development and Zoning ordinances.

Goal #5: Most of the comments on this Goal – and the attached Objectives – focused on condensing to make more concise. There was discussion over the political 'push' toward electrification of the vehicle fleet and the need for electric charging infrastructure to be able to handle it. The Commonwealth's NEVI Plan was discussed.

Question regarding making one change regardless of cost: This survey question highlighted more current issues and needs vs. "grandiose" changes:

- Necessary studies and resultant changes along the PA 183 corridor between US 222 and I-78
- Finishing US 222 North
- Locating a possible interchange on US 222 near Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Road
- Removing/regulating truck traffic on local roads
- Better/more availability of public transportation, particularly in the rural areas
- Better/more connections between modes of transportation including more Park and Ride lots
- Intersection improvements at PA 724 and Gibraltar Road
- Improvements to Shartlesville Road
- Overall improvements to sections of US 422 throughout the County, including the planned US 422 West Shore Bypass reconstruction
- Improvements to PA 12 (Pricetown Road)
- Necessary improvements to the US 422/PA 10/Lancaster Ave. intersection

Ms. Timochenko that the next Steering Committee meeting will have rewritten Goals and Objectives for review. A final call for general questions/comments was placed; the following were received:

- (Chat) Mr. Burns stated that this was a good recap of the survey responses
- Ms. Ahlskog mentioned that SCTA/BARTA does have Park and Ride lots but she is unfamiliar with where they all are and will research further
- (Chat) Mr. Burns questioned how Lottery proceeds 'cover' elderly public transportation. Mr. Boatman explained which services are and are not covered by PA Lottery funds.
- (Chat) Mr. Young placed a web link to PennDOT-maintained Park and Ride lots in the Chat.

Ms. Timochenko outlined the next steps that staff will be undertaking. As data in the current LRTP are updated, they will cover the 2019-2024 time frame. Background data updates will be occurring and will take time. There will be another round of Public Meetings in February/March 2025, possibly in conjunction with the STC's Twelve Year Program update.

Ms. Zejcirovic asked if FHWA/FTA will have an opportunity to review the draft LRTP prior to final Public Input in early 2026? Ms. Timochenko said yes.

Ms. Timochenko thanked all for their time today and announced the next meeting date which is presently scheduled for Monday February 17, 2025. That date coincides with the Presidents Day Holiday and some people including County staff are not working that day. She asked for consensus to move the meeting to Monday, February 24, 2025, beginning at 1:00 PM, via MS Teams. Most attendees concurred. The meeting concluded at 1:46 PM.

*Prepared by,
Michael D. Golembiewski
Transportation Modeler*

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION