

**RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4
MAY 19, 2025, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Attendance:

Amanda Timochenko (BCPC staff)	Michael Donchez (PennDOT District 5-0)
Michael Golembiewski (BCPC staff)	Ed Burns (Burns Logistics Specialists)
Lawrence Peterson (PennDOT District 5-0)	Lisha Rowe (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member, Cumru Twp. Commissioner)
Lauri Ahlskog (South Central Transit Auth.)	Donna Reed (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member, City of Reading Council Pres.)
Scott Vottero (PennDOT District 5-0)	David Mattes (BCPC Board Member)
Nyomi Nonnemaker (PennDOT Central Office)	Alan Piper (BCPC staff)
Stephanie Quigley (Abilities in Motion)	Devon Hain (BCPC staff)
Ron Young (PennDOT District 5-0)	Ronnique Bishop (FHWA)
Zackary Tempesco (Reading Regional Airport)	Matthew McGough (BCPC staff)
David Hunter (Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority)	

Meeting Notes:

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

Ms. Timochenko began by showing four (4) different slides that outlined the results of both Public Outreach efforts (fall, 2024 and spring, 2025).

- Slide 1: Map of Berks County showing planning regions and locations of all meetings held. The meetings held in fall 2024 had better attendance. Meetings held in spring 2025 were not as well attended, but we still obtained valuable feedback from all participants.
- Slide 2: A summary of comments from fall 2024 was discussed. The slide had some notable examples of comments.
- Slide 3: A similar summary of comments from spring 2025 was discussed. Again, notable examples of input received were shown.
- Slide 4: Examples of 'non-mappable' comments (i.e., line painting needs) were discussed along with more regional needs.

Mr. Donchez asked if any analysis was undertaken of all comments and any locations that coincided with an existing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project? Ms. Timochenko responded that those projects that were identified as TIP projects were still shown on the maps. Additionally, we are awaiting the results from the State Transportation Commission's (STC's)

Twelve Year Program (TYP) survey to combine public input from that effort with what we've received through our outreach. When we get that information a more thorough analysis of requests vs. projects will be undertaken. So far, less than approximately 25% of the publicly requested projects are part of an existing programmed project. Once we receive and analyze the TYP public input, a list will be shared with Mr. Donchez. Mr. Piper made note that some of the public requests were for maintenance-type projects vs. capital projects. Maintenance projects would not necessarily show up on the TIP.

Mr. Tempesco asked if the Reading Regional Airport (RDG) related requests were specific or general requests for restoration of scheduled passenger service? Ms. Timochenko responded that they were general requests for the restoration of scheduled passenger service. Mr. Tempesco offered to host a separate meeting or add time to a Steering Committee agenda to discuss airport-specific issues. He said that RDG is physically ready to receive scheduled passenger service but is not being actively pursued by carriers. RDG needs to 'sell the airport and the community' to attract service. They have been and continue to do so. He further said that offering scheduled service will not initially make any profit for the airport and would have to be subsidized. Would the community be willing to provide those subsidies is a question that would have to be answered. In the regional context that includes Lancaster (LNS), Allentown (ABE), and Harrisburg (HBG), RDG is not yet competitive enough.

After asking for and receiving no additional questions or comments, Ms. Timochenko began to discuss the four (4) draft sections that were sent out. She apologized that the text was not sent out sooner for Committee member review. Upon questioning Committee members, it was confirmed that one (1) week's lead time to review prior to a scheduled meeting is satisfactory to Committee members. Section discussions included:

- A. **Aviation:** Ms. Timochenko gave a brief overview of the section then asked for questions/comments. Mr. Donchez mentioned that there were eight (8) private airports on the included chart, but only seven (7) were mapped. Mr. Piper responded that staff would confirm. Mr. Tempesco mentioned that RDG has the only public paved runway in the County; all others listed are grass. We could add a column to the chart to distinguish this characteristic and reduce the amount of text. Additionally, he added that we should consider addressing 'Advanced Air Mobility' concepts that are becoming more prolific such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's, or drones), Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) and Electric VTOL (EVTOL) vehicles, all with both cargo and passenger capabilities.
- B. **Non-Motorized Transportation:** Ms. Timochenko gave a brief overview of the section then asked for questions/comments. Mr. Donchez mentioned that, within the Sidewalks and Pedestrians subsection, PennDOT faces difficulties in convincing municipalities to sign Sidewalk Maintenance Agreements for sidewalks on new/rehabilitated bridges. PennDOT historically does not maintain sidewalks so will not place sidewalks on bridges without maintenance agreements in place. It was suggested that we add generalized language into this section that encourages municipalities to

sign maintenance agreements so sidewalks can be added, and pedestrian networks can be connected. Staff agreed. Next, Mr. Piper mentioned that the paragraph on Micromobility, currently under the Bicycles subsection, should be broken out as its own subsection so more emphasis could be placed on this growing segment of nonmotorized transportation.

- C. **Passenger Rail:** Ms. Timochenko gave a brief overview of the section then asked for questions/comments. Ms. Ahlskog mentioned a new private intercity bus provider, FlixBus, is providing service to Philadelphia and other locations in eastern Pennsylvania. They are using the same bus berth in the BARTA Transportation Center that was formerly used by AMTRAK to provide similar service. Mr. Tempesco added that historically airports have also served as bus hubs. Since the LRTP covers a 20-year plan horizon, adding text regarding the consideration of RDG serving as a bus hub could be a future potential interest, particularly if it offers the potential to coordinate with future air service.
- D. **Rail Freight:** Ms. Timochenko gave a brief overview of the section then asked for questions/comments. Mr. Donchez asked if the list of rail users was general or prioritized in any way? Mr. McGough stated that is not prioritized as this information was taken directly from information obtained from the Federal Railroad Administration.

There being no further discussion on the draft sections, Ms. Timochenko described some of the next immediate steps in the LRTP development process (in no specific order):

- A. Continue developing and revising draft sections.
- B. Review public input results from the STC public survey and combine with those we've received from our outreach efforts.
- C. Create an online mapping portal for the public to report issues.

Mr. Piper stated that as we begin the process of creating the draft FFY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), certain development steps and document sections will run concurrently with the LRTP development. One result of that is that proposed projects can be placed on either the draft TIP, in the draft LRTP, or on a 'concept list'. He also mentioned the challenges incurred with uncertainties in federal funding as the federal legislation that governs funding levels expires in the first year of the TIP/LRTP, so estimating future funding levels is difficult. Ultimately funding levels determine what projects can be programmed and in what time frames.

Ms. Timochenko asked for any additional comments or questions. Hearing none she thanked everyone for their time today and announced the next meeting date is presently scheduled for Monday, August 18, 2025, beginning at 1:00 PM, via MS Teams. The meeting concluded at 1:56 PM.

*Prepared by,
Michael D. Golembiewski
Transportation Modeler*

BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION