

READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
JANUARY 9, 2025

ATTENDANCE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0, Chair*
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
Nyomi Nonnemaker, PennDOT Central, Vice Chair
Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Kyle Zeiber, City of Reading
Timothy Krall, City of Reading

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Zachary Tempesco, Reading Regional Airport Authority

*Tie-breaking vote only

OTHERS

Michael Donchez, PennDOT 5-0
Lawrence Petterson, PennDOT 5-0
Lauri Ahlskog, South Central Transit Authority
Matthew Boyer, CommutePA
Stephen Chiaramonte, WSP
Elvin Herrera, City of Reading
David Hunter, Berks County Planning Commission, Executive Director
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, Berks County Planning Commission
Shanice Ellison, Berks County Planning Commission
Matthew McGough, Berks County Planning Commission
Melissa Lewis, Berks County Information Systems
IS Production, Berks County Information Systems

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Vottero called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Piper stated that at the November 14, 2024 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting, nominations were made for officers for the Technical Committee. Those nominations were for the PennDOT District 5-0 Assistant District Executive for Design as Chairman and the PennDOT Central Office representative as Vice-Chairman.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to elect the nominees. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no business from the floor. Mr. Golembiewski stated that there was no public comment.

4. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 14, 2024 JOINT TECHNICAL/COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Vottero asked if there were any questions or comments on the November 14, 2024 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the November 14, 2024 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Zeiber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. RECOMMENDATION ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) – METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BERKS COUNTY, PA BETWEEN THE READING MPO, SCTA AND PENNDOT

Mr. Piper stated that staff has been working on the MOU with input from the various agencies identified in the agreement. He further stated that this agreement outlines the various specific planning responsibilities to be performed by the three parties identified in the MOU. The MOU documents which agency is responsible for each of the planning activities as well as who the lead agency is for those activities. Mr. Piper stated that the MOU sets up agreements for the ability to prepare the documents and prepare the needed information to move them forward. These documents include items like the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and CMP. It also provides coordination on the various planning activities that RATS does with SCTA, both individually and jointly.

Mr. Piper stated that final approval of the document will require action by SCTA, the MPO, and PennDOT.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the MOU for Metropolitan Transportation Planning Responsibilities for Berks County, PA between the Reading MPO, SCTA, and PennDOT. Mr. Boatman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. 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 November 7, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

- There are nine (9) Administrative Actions – the adjustments address such things as adding a selected TAP project to the TIP, the Angelica Creek Trail Extension, increases to adjust low-cost bid amounts, increases for supplements, increases for recent estimates to the utility and construction phases, and aligning phase funding with anticipated need.
- There were no Interstate Management Administration Actions
- There were no Statewide Administration Actions or Amendments

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

SCTA provided information regarding amendments/modifications to the FFY 2025-2028 Transit TIP. Ms. Ahlskog presented that the modification includes the purchase of paratransit buses. SCTA will utilize PennDOT 5339 funding in place of the Federal 5307 funding to secure the paratransit buses.

7. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON FY 2025-2027 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Mr. Golembiewski stated that at the November 14, 2024 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting the MPO staff received approval to forward the draft FY 2025-2026 and FY 2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and PennDOT for their required 30-day review and comment period.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that during this time one comment was received from FHWA staff. Mr. Golembiewski went on to describe the comment from FHWA as a recommendation to add a section within the UPWP amendment and modification thresholds found on page 8 of the PennDOT Memorandum of Understanding for the Administration of Pennsylvania's State Planning and Research (SPR) Work Program. Staff updated the UPWP with relevant content from pages 6 and 7 (Sections 2.3 and 2.3.1) and added it to Pages 7 and 8 of the draft UPWP, and the Table of Contents was updated to reflect revised page numbering throughout the document. The updated document was forwarded to Ms. Zejcirovic (FHWA) for concurrence and no further response was received. Staff received no response to the original or revised drafts from FTA staff.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the FY 2025-2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA FREIGHT ALLIANCE FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Mr. Piper stated that in October 2024 the MPO had a regional briefing on this plan and at the November 14, 2024 Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee meeting we had a formal presentation outlining the plan document, regional freight profile, and associated appendices. Mr. Piper stated that after that presentation the committees had the opportunity to review the plan and come back with any comments on it. At the time of this meeting no comments were received from persons on either committee or the public.

Mr. Piper stated that what staff is looking for today is the recommendation by the Technical Committee to forward the plan to the Coordinating Committee for their adoption.

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance Freight Infrastructure Plan and the associated profile and appendices. Mr. Zeiber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

9. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION OF RATS TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORT 2019-2023

Ms. Timochenko stated that the draft RATS Annual Traffic Safety Report 2019-2023 identifies trends and potential mitigation strategies that can be used to reduce overall traffic related crashes, fatalities and serious injuries. This is done through the examination of crash trends and identification and programming of mitigation strategies.

The report is used as a tool to help monitor our existing transportation conditions and to help identify and program projects on both the TIP and the LRTP. Included in the report is information on both the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the PennDOT District 5-0 Safety Plan and incorporates those themes and focus areas that are identified in those plan as progressing towards zero deaths across the State.

The annual traffic safety report covers the 5-year period from 2019 to 2023 and the data for the report was obtained using the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT). The trend summary reports were updated for the document which identified trends for the indicator over the 5-year period.

New to the report this year, actual values for the performance measures were added for the 5-year period. At the end of November 2024 staff had met with PennDOT staff to go over which datasets and calculations the department used to determine the 2019-2023 targets so that our staff could use the same datasets and calculations to determine the actual performance numbers and include that information in the RATS report.

Overall, RATS met the target numbers for both number of serious injuries and serious injury rates. The other three targets, number of fatalities, fatality rate, and number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries were not met for the Reading MPO.

The document contains mitigation strategies to improve roadway safety. RATS staff will continue to consider those strategies and coordinate and work with PennDOT to identify strategies and projects that can improve safety on Berks County roadways for all users.

Ms. Timochenko added that also included in this year's report is an executive summary at the beginning of the report that gives a brief overview of the report as well as a brief summary of the performance measure findings and the scorecard trends.

Chairman Voterro inquired as to whether the report includes the Interstate system. Ms. Timochenko added that it does include the Interstate system.

Mr. Krall inquired as to whether the report data is based on State reporting data. Ms. Timochenko responded that yes, it is based off of Statewide reportable crash data. Mr. Krall then asked if any local reports were included. Ms. Timochenko responded no local police report data is used in preparation of the document. It is based off of the data that is reported to the PCIT. Mr. Krall then asked if the PCIT tool was available to the public. Ms. Timochenko added that it is and provided the following link to the tool in the meeting chat should anyone be interested in it: <https://crashinfo.penndot.pa.gov/PCIT>

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the RATS Annual Traffic Safety Report 2019-2023. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

10. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON RATS ANNUAL PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITION REPORT 2019-2023

Ms. Hain presented the updated Bridge and Pavement conditions report for the 2019-2023 5-year period. Similar to the traffic safety report the annual pavement and bridge conditions report is based on the performance measures for pavement and bridge conditions. Every year PennDOT transmits an annual performance measures report. The RATS Annual Pavement and Bridge Report expands on this data and puts it into a report as presented.

Ms. Hain went through the report by introducing the table of contents and the five sections contained within the report. The ultimate goal of the report is to help guide investment decisions to keep Berks County roads and bridges in good working order. This is done by determining potential projects for inclusion in the RATS TIP and LRTP.

Ms. Hain continued her presentation by reviewing multiple tables and charts outlining the pavement and bridge conditions throughout Berks County. Like the Traffic Safety report, this report identifies trends by using the same scorecard method to evaluate the performance measures of both pavement and bridges.

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of 2019-2023 Pavement and Bridge Conditions Report. Mr. Boatman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

11. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION ON ADOPTION OF SCTA 2025 SAFETY PLAN

Mr. Boatman made a presentation regarding the updated SCTA Safety Plan. In accordance with the requirements of 49 CFR Parts 673.13(a) SCTA as authorized in 49 CFR Parts 673.11(d) does hereby certify that it has established a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, meeting the requirements of this part effective April 9, 2024.

Mr. Boatman continued that SCTA further certifies that on an annual basis it will certify its compliance with 49 CFR Parts 673.13(b) in accordance with the SCTA Safety Plan adopted by the Board of Directors on December 18, 2024. The original adopted plan was on September 16, 2020 and has been updated in 2022, 2023 and currently in December 2024 as well.

The summary of changes to the SCTA Public Transportation Safety Plan for 2025 were included in the committee packets. The summary includes tables showing FY 2023 and 2024 results that were received on pages nine and ten of the plan. One item added was the number of assaults of transit workers as a category to track moving forward. The safety target plan for FY 2025 includes fatalities, injuries, safety events, and system reliability.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the SCTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

12. REPORT ON PLANNING PARTNERS PM2 & PM3 MID PERFORMANCE TARGET ADJUSTMENT LETTER

Mr. Golembiewski began his presentation by informing the committee that this is for information only and no formal action needs to be taken. PM2 measures relate to pavement and bridge conditions whereas PM3 measures relate to freight movement, congestion management and air quality.

In February 2023, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) established 2-year and 4-year targets for the PM-2 and PM-3 measures for the 2022-2025 performance period. The targets were developed in coordination with Pennsylvania's Metropolitan and Regional Planning Organizations (MPO/RPO). Each MPO/RPO agreed to support the PennDOT statewide and regional PM-2 and PM-3 targets established at that time. PennDOT submitted a final version of the Mid Performance Period Progress Report to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on October 31, 2024. Based on the performance review, there were no changes to statewide targets or to MPO specific targets impacting the Reading MPO.

13. REPORT ON RATS ANNUAL LIST OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS FOR FFY 2024

Mr. McGough presented that in accordance with federal regulations the RATS Annual List of Obligated Projects was prepared and posted to the MPO's website. The document identifies all the highway, bridge, and transit projects in Berks County that have received

obligated Federal funding during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024.

14. PENNDOT UPDATES ON TASA/MTF AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Chairman Vottero gave an update on the status of Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside projects, Multimodal Transportation projects, and highway projects.

15. COMMUTEPA UPDATE

Mr. Boyer presented CommutePA's November 2024 Monthly Activity Report to the Committee. Mr. Boyer presented some activities from the month of December as well. Mr. Boyer explained that CommutePA has continued to meet with employers, including Berks Nature, Berks Community Health, the City of Reading, the Berks CareerLink office, and PSU Berks. During the month of December, 82 new members were signed up for the program. Over 7,600 trips were tracked during the month of December, saving over \$93,000 for commuters and taking over 193,000 miles off the road because people are carpooling or using other forms of transportation as an alternative to driving alone to work.

Mr. Boyer updated the committee on major initiatives being undertaken by CommutePA. One being the regional BikeShare Program, another being the Regional Congestion Management Plan, lastly the application by the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Authority for the national TDM accreditation.

16. REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF RATS LOGO CONCEPTS

Mr. Piper advised the committee that after review and discussion there remain two potential selections for the Reading Area Transportation Study's logo. Mr. Piper stated that the remaining two options will be brought before the Coordinating Committee at its January 16, 2025 meeting for ultimate decision and approval.

17. OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Piper advised the committee that there was one item under other business. It was a question for Chairman Vottero regarding the Reading Regional Airport's plan to upgrade runway lighting and what the process is if the proposed lighting is going to encroach into PennDOT's right-of-way. Some of the poles for the runway lighting upgrade project would extend across the US-222 right-of-way. The airport has submitted a highway occupancy permit application to be reviewed by PennDOT. Mr. Piper inquired as to if this was the same type of procedure that they would go through if it were just a driveway access.

Mr. Vottero answered that although they do not have a technical lighting person on staff that would perform the review it would still go through the same highway occupancy permit process. The proposal would be reviewed pertinent to FAA standards as opposed to PennDOT standards. Mr. Vottero expressed that it should be a painless process for the airport.

Ms. Timochenko updated the committee on the status of LRTP development. Ms. Timochenko added that on November 18, 2024 staff held the second LRTP Steering Committee meeting. At that meeting staff reviewed with the committee the comments and recommended changes received during the five outreach meetings regarding the goals and objectives and the vision statement. Currently, staff is reviewing all of the information and developing edits and changes to the goals and vision statement so that staff can take the information back to the LRTP Steering Committee for their review and approval. The next meeting for the LRTP Steering Committee is scheduled for February 24, 2025.

Mr. Golembiewski stated that there was no public comment.

18. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:56 PM.

Date: _____

Alan D. Piper