

DRAFT
READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
MAY 1, 2025

ATTENDANCE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Zackary Tempesco, Reading Regional Airport Authority

*Tie-breaking vote only

OTHERS

Nick Raio, PennDOT Central
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0
Lawrence Peterson, PennDOT 5-0
Kerri Cutright, PennDOT 5-0
Ronnique Bishop, FHWA
Michele Scribbick, CommutePA
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
Carl Long, Berks County Information Systems
IS Production, Berks County Information Systems

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Vottero called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Golembiewski stated that there was no public comment. There were five (5) viewers watching on YouTube.

3. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 6, 2025 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Vottero asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 6, 2025 Technical Committee meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to recommend approval of the March 6, 2025 Technical 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 recent phase estimates, increases from supplements, increases to renew the freeway service patrol project, increases to cover funds that were advanced constructed off of the 2023 TIP, increase to add signalization to the Hawk Ridge Road Extension/4th Street intersection of the SR 61 (15M) project, increases to cover negotiated agreement amounts plus internal costs, and an increase for supplements to address potential realignment of existing roadway and surrounding cultural resource impacts.
- There were two (2) Interstate Management Administration Actions – the adjustments address an increase to extend the limits of repaving by one-half mile for the I-78 to Hamburg resurfacing project and adding final design, right-of-way, and construction to the 2025 Interstate TIP for the Grimes Interchange Removal Project
- There were no Statewide Administrative Actions

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

5. 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 April 30th. Staff heavily advertised and promoted the public comment period and survey to the public. 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 the data that comes out of the STC's public comment period will come back to staff with the survey responses received that 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. 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. Piper explained that the vertical red line on the accompanying spreadsheet reflects the previously agreed upon shift in the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) funding to the Interstate Program. Once we get to FFY 2028 there will be no more reductions to accommodate the current agreement. Everything else is flat across the board on the highway and bridge side.

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.

Ms. Timochenko added that staff will be sending out project solicitation forms to the municipalities next week to gather more input from them on potential needs and issues for consideration in the TIP update.

6. 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.

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, freight/rail freight, and non-motorized sections of the LRTP update. As the process continues, staff hope to develop an online web-based map portal where the public can report transportation issues. That feature is anticipated to be a permanent piece of our website.

Mr. Krall inquired as to where people that want more information will be directed? Will they be referred to the County website or PennDOT's? If they have questions about what is on the TIP or the LRTP how are they going to see where they are? Mr. Piper answered that for what is on the TIP now, the PennDOT site is the official place to look. Mr. Krall added that he tends to direct people to the PennDOT site, especially when it comes to paving projects. Mr. Krall stated that he gets a lot of inquiries about paving. Mr. Piper stated that paving is not necessarily a TIP function, it is more of a capital project. Mr. Krall stated that the PennDOT site seems to have all of the information. Chairman Vottero added that paving is a maintenance project and it usually depends on how winter goes. He noted that in a light winter they do more paving and in a heavy winter they do less paving. Most of this information will be on the PennDOT website.

7. PENNDOT UPDATES ON HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

Chairman Vottero gave an update on the status of highway and bridge projects.

8. COMMUTEPA UPDATE

Ms. Scribbick provided an update on the CommutePA's most recent operations and endeavors. Ms. Scribbick stated that they have recently partnered with the Reading Public Library to ensure that CommutePA's program information is communicated to/at all of the 25 Berks County libraries for the staff and the communities they service. Ms. Scribbick presented that staff participated in the County's Health Fair at the Berks County Services Center and Berks Heim. CommutePA staff also visited Sweet Streets Deserts and Penn State University Berks Campus to educate, and engage the staffs, faculty, and students about the utilization of the CommutePA program in celebration of Earth Day. Ms. Scribbick added that she recently conducted a workshop at the PA CareerLink Berks career fair which had

incredible attendance. There were many people that learned about CommutePA's free transportation resources. Lastly, Ms. Scribbick relayed that she is working with Alvernia University to engage the students with their program. The university gave permission to put informational posters to be displayed in the daily van shuttles between the main and downtown campuses. To date, 351 green commutes have been recorded.

9. OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Piper had one item under other business. Mr. Piper shared that on April 28th staff received notice from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that they had approved the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that staff submitted for the Reading MPO. With their approval of the UPWP it was then incorporated into a draft work order #3, which is the MPO's agreement between Berks County and PennDOT for the funding of RATS for the next two federal fiscal years 2026-2027. The Berks County Planning Commission office executed that agreement last week. Currently, it is working its way through the PennDOT execution process. Mr. Piper stated that he is hopeful it will be executed prior to the next federal fiscal year kick-off on July 1, 2025.

Mr. Golembiewski stated there were five (5) individuals watching the meeting via YouTube and that there was no public comment.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Golembiewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:13 PM.

Date: _____

Alan D. Piper
(MPO Secretary)