

READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
MINUTES OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
MAY 2, 2024

ATTENDANCE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Scott Vottero, PennDOT 5-0, Chair*
David Alas, PennDOT Central, Vice Chairman
Alan Piper, Berks County Planning Commission, MPO Secretary
Michael Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission
Lauri Ahlskog, South Central Transit Authority, Alternate
Tim Krall, City of Reading
Michael Donchez, Alternate for PennDOT 5-0

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING

Keith Boatman, South Central Transit Authority
Kyle Zeiber, City of Reading
Zachary Tempesco, Reading Regional Airport Authority

*Tie-breaking vote only

OTHERS

Jennifer Ruth, PennDOT 5-0
Lawrence Peterson, PennDOT 5-0
Kerri Cutright, PennDOT 5-0
Matthew Boyer, Commuter Services of PA
Jeff Rai, PennDOT 5-0
Nyomi Evans, PennDOT Central
Adrian Jadic
Amanda Timochenko, Berks County Planning Commission
Devon Hain, 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. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

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

3. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 7, 2024 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Vottero asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 7, 2024, Technical Committee meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

MOTION: Mr. Krall made a motion to approve the March 7, 2024, Technical Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PENNDOT REQUESTED AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS TO FFY 2023-2026 TIP

Mr. Donchez gave an update on PennDOT's requested Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from February 29, 2024, to April 22, 2024.

- There are six (6) Administrative Actions – the adjustments deal with increases needed for phase supplements, right of way, low bid amounts, modifications involving cash flowing and advancing funds to align with when they are anticipated to be needed and increases to address accrued unbilled costs.
- There is one (1) Statewide Administrative Action – the adjustment deals with cash flowing HSIP Spike funds for the State Hill Road project that extends from Colony Drive to the SR 222 southbound ramps.
- There is one (1) Amendment – the adjustment deals with adding the SR 222 Truck Weigh Station construction phase to the current FFY 2023-2026 RATS TIP. The project is located in Brecknock Township near the Berks County boundary with Lancaster County. The intent is to realign the existing entranceway to the truck weigh station which currently is a right-angle turn. Right now, trucks have to reduce speed on northbound SR 222 to approximately 10 miles per hour to enter the truck weigh station. The speed limit on SR 222 is 55 miles per hour. The truck weigh station is frequently used by the Pennsylvania State Police. The State Police's Safety Division requested more of a tapered entrance rather than a right-angle entrance into the inspection area. Safety at the truck weigh station would greatly improve by implementing a tapered entrance to the inspection area. This project would be added as a companion project to an existing project on the current TIP as part of a SR 222 resurfacing project in District 8 in Lancaster County which is approximately 1-2 miles south of the truck weigh station location in Berks County. The SR 222 resurfacing project is scheduled to go to construction later this fall. The estimated cost for this project is \$190,000 which would be funded using NHPP funds. As this a new project being added to the current TIP and uses federal funds for construction, the Amendment requires a vote from the Committee.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to recommend approval by the Coordinating Committee of the Amendment to add the SR 222 Truck Weigh Station project to the current FFY 2023-2026 TIP. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. SCTA REQUESTED MODIFICATIONS TO THE FFY 2023-2026 TIP

Ms. Ahlskog gave an update on South Central Transit Authority's (SCTA) requested transit Amendments/Modifications to the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) from July 5, 2023 to February 14, 2024.

- There is one (1) Administrative Actions – the adjustment deals with the purchase of paratransit buses and realigning the funds from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 to align with anticipated grant funding and to include 5307 funds for the project.
- There are no Amendments.

6. REVIEW/RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRAFT FFY 2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ELEMENTS FOR APPROVAL

Mr. Piper stated that he will review each of the following elements of the Draft FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and will ask at the end for a recommendation on all the items to be forwarded to the Coordinating Committee for approval.

a. AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY REPORT

Mr. Piper stated that there have been no changes to the Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report after its release for public comment. There were no public comments received related to this report.

b. AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY RESOLUTION

Mr. Piper stated that the Air Quality Conformity Resolution has to be approved by the Coordinating Committee as part of the TIP Development Process. The Resolution gets incorporated into the final submission.

c. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUMMARY

Mr. Piper stated that an Executive Summary was added to the beginning of the Environmental Justice Summary which is the only modification to the document after it was available for public review and comment. There were no public comments received related to this document.

d. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – PROCEDURES FOR FFY 2025-2028 TIP REVISIONS

Mr. Piper stated that the Memorandum of Understanding is the agreement among the Reading MPO, PennDOT, and the South Central Transit Authority documenting procedures to be followed when performing TIP amendments or modifications. This agreement must be adopted by the Coordinating Committee and incorporated into the final TIP document.

e. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Piper reviewed the comments received during the public review and comment period for the FFY 2025-2028 TIP, Environmental Justice Summary, and Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report. The public review and comment period began on March 24, 2024, and ended on April 23, 2024. There was a total of 12 comments received from 7 individuals. Mr. Piper reviewed the proposed responses to the comments received. The proposed responses must be approved by the Coordinating Committee. Once approved, the responses will be sent out to those individuals that submitted comments. The public comments and responses to those comments are found in Appendix E of the FFY 2025-2028 TIP document on page 379 ([09-AppE.pdf \(berkspa.gov\)](#)).

Mr. Jadic commented via YouTube that he agreed with the need to find more modern ways to inform residents about meetings. Some effective ways he has seen includes email distribution lists and public calendar subscriptions.

f. FFY 2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Piper stated that the only changes that continue to be made to the FFY 2025-2028 TIP document are in Appendix E regarding the documentation of public participation and outreach.

g. RATS SELF-CERTIFICATION RESOLUTION

Mr. Piper stated that the RATS Self-Certification Resolution is a required statement that is done at the end of the process where the MPO certifies that they followed the applicable federal requirements related to this process.

MOTION: Mr. Alas made a motion to recommend adoption by the Coordinating Committee of the Draft RATS FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program document and corresponding elements. Mr. Krall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. PENNDOT UPDATES ON HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

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

8. COMMUTEPA UPDATE

Mr. Boyer reported that CommutePA outreach staff continues to meet with local employers and organizations conducting meetings and on-site events. The outreach team has been in contact with Ashley Furniture, Bethany Childrens Home, Alvernia College, Tower Health, and Berks CareerLink.

In April, CommutePA participated in and promoted various Earth Day events. May is National Bike Month. In May is the Bike to Work week where CommutePA promotes green trips and the regional bike share program. An announcement was sent out for the Berks County group annual Bike to Work Week ride on May 17, 2024, starting near the Tower Health Reading Hospital and the Masonic Lodge in West Reading. It has been a huge success in previous years, and we are gearing up to provide an e-bike to a local law enforcement agency which this year will be the City of Reading as part of that public-private partnership.

CommutePA continues to participate in the regional bike share initiative. Keep an eye out for the new bikes that are available at and around Tower Health, Wyomissing, and other locations.

CommutePA is moving ahead with a regional Congestion Management Process (CMP) for participating counties in PennDOT District 8-0. This plan concept was recently endorsed by Federal Highway Administration which will enable a rollout of this project in state Federal Fiscal Year 2025 which will be after July 1st. More details for this will be available at our May SRTP Board meeting.

CommutePA's TASA application to develop a Safe Routes to Schools Program was not recommended to move forward and did not receive funding. We will continue to work with PennDOT to improve the program and the application to help attain a better score next year.

SRTP was selected as one of fifteen nationwide organizations to become part of a new accreditation program run by the Association for Commuter Transportation. They are a national organization and they are looking to create an accreditation path for organizations that provide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.

During the month of March, 86 new members joined the program, over 7,400 trips were tracked, and over 150,000 miles not driven were recorded for a savings of approximately \$101,000 as a result of using green modes of transportation.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. Piper stated that PennDOT announced the Statewide TASA funding recipients. Berks Nature was awarded approximately \$376,000 from statewide funds. Based on our recommendations, they received an additional \$1.1 million from our allocations. Altogether, Berks Nature received approximately \$1.5 million in TASA funds for their extension of the Angelica Creek Trail in Kenhorst Borough and Cumru Township. The

only other applicant that we considered was the Boyertown Railyard for Colebrookdale Railroad. They did not receive funding in this cycle either.

- Mr. Piper made a recommendation to cancel the June 6, 2024, Technical Committee meeting. The next meeting will be on July 11, 2024.

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to cancel the June 6 2024, Technical Committee meeting. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Piper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Golembiewski seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Date: _____

Alan D. Piper