

**2027 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1
SEPTEMBER 29, 2026, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Attendance:

Michael Golembiewski (BCPC staff)	Don Edwards (City of Reading)
Matthew McGough (BCPC staff)	Laura Heilman (CommutePA)
Devon Hain (BCPC staff)	Mark Watkins (Fleetwood Borough)
Amanda Timochenko (BCPC staff)	Sean Brown (PennDOT District 5-0)
Alan Piper (BCPC staff)	Judy Houck (Spring Township)
Ashley Showers (BCPC staff)	Nyomi Nonnemaker (PennDOT Central Office)
Leo Scott (BCPC staff)	Tami Shimp (Berks Nature)
Jose Lopez-Rocha (PennDOT District 5-0)	Jeremy Haymaker (Berks Nature)
Lauri Ahlskog (South Central Transit Auth.)	Kevin Lerch (Muhlenberg Township)
Matthew Boyer (CommutePA)	Jordan Dean Kurth (Penn State Health Community Health Coordinator)
Ellen Martignetti (Building a Better Boyertown)	Steven Miguel Negron-Candelario (Penn State Health REACH Coordinator)
Lisha Rowe (RATS Coordinating Committee Board Member)	Jeff Witman (Exeter Township Planning Commission)
Donald Hirsch (Penn State Health Community Health Coordinator)	

Meeting Notes:

Mr. Golembiewski started the meeting at 1:33 PM. He welcomed everyone and shared a PowerPoint presentation (see attachment at the end of these notes). Staff introduced themselves.

Mr. Golembiewski then shared a chart of participating organizations. All attendees introduced themselves and their affiliation.

Mr. Golembiewski described the organizations participating in the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee participants represent a diverse group of organizations with interests in the future of the active transportation system.

Mr. Golembiewski described the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee. These include:

- Review components of the plan throughout plan development and provide input and recommendations.
- Provide system analysis / data.

- Provide technical assistance on public transportation service operations and needs.
- Assist in public outreach efforts.
- Assist in project selection and prioritization.

He then described the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) and the Committee structure.

Mr. Golembiewski explained what an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is along with what is identified, reflected, and included in the plan. It is also noted that the Active Transportation Plan serves as the non-motorized component of the Long Range Transportation Plan. Previous iterations were also discussed dating from 2000, 2010, and 2020.

The next few slides detailed the ATP Plan Components, by Chapter.

Chapter 1 is the Introduction. The **Vision Statement** is included in this chapter: *Healthy, vibrant and economically strong communities encourage and value transportation connectivity. Berks County will be a place where people of all ages and abilities can safely, comfortably and conveniently walk or bicycle everywhere.* Additionally, the Introduction is where the Goals and Objectives, as well as the Federal Certification Review Comments can be found.

Chapter 2 contains the background information, including Active Transportation Concepts, Safety and Active Transportation Planning, Current Active Transportation Programming, and Demographics.

Chapter 3 is Issues and Concerns. Individual sections examine Survey Results & Analysis, Electric Powered Micromobility, Transit Background and Access, Trails and Sidewalks, Bicycle and Pedestrian Level of Stress (LOS), and Network Connectivity & Priority Areas.

Chapter 4 is the Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Crash Analysis and Strategies. These include Safety Performance Measures, a VRU Safety Assessment and VRU High Crash Location Summary Pages.

Chapter 5 is Implementation. Included in this chapter are sections related to Funding, Project Timing, Proven Countermeasures, Implementation Strategies, and the Potential Projects and Prioritization Table.

The PowerPoint presentation then went on to identify the ten (10) Federal Planning Factors that must be incorporated into the LRTP:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- **Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.**
- **Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.**
- **Increase accessibility and mobility of people** and freight.

- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
- Enhance travel and tourism.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th factors were in bold and highlighted as these relate directly to Active Transportation Planning.

The ATP must coordinate with other related plans. The plans listed include the PA Active Transportation Plan, RATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), RATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Berks County Greenway Park and Recreation Plan (GPRP), Berks County Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Berks Plan, Municipal Comprehensive Plans, Other Local Plans (B/P, ATP, OS/R), and Partner Plans.

Mr. Golembiewski asked the Steering Committee if they had any questions regarding the make up of the upcoming Active Transportation Plan or any of the slides reviewed.

Mr. Golembiewski then reviewed the Vision Statement from the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020.

- *“Healthy, vibrant and economically strong communities encourage and value transportation connectivity. Berks County will be a place where people of all ages and abilities can safely, comfortably and conveniently walk or bicycle everywhere.”*

Mr. Golembiewski asked the Steering Committee if they agreed with this Vision Statement and if there were suggestions on a new vision statement or edits to the existing vision statement.

- Ms. Timochenko suggested removing the first sentence in the Vision Statement. Ms. Martignetti agreed.
- Devon Hain suggested the Vision Statement be edited to include ‘roll’ so that it would read ‘...conveniently walk, roll or bicycle everywhere.’ Mr. McGough agreed.

Mr. Golembiewski confirmed that the new Vision Statement would be: *“Berks County will be a place where people of all ages and abilities can safely, comfortably and conveniently walk, roll or bicycle everywhere.”*

Mr. Golembiewski then reviewed the Goals and Objectives from the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020.

- Goal #1: Protect and maintain the current bicycle and pedestrian network with efforts to prevent degradation or loss of infrastructure.
 - Obj. 1: Ensure that the current trail system does not fall into a state of disrepair;
 - Obj. 2: Ensure municipalities are enforcing sidewalk maintenance ordinances, and promote the implementation of sidewalk repair and improvement programs;
 - Obj. 3: Work with municipalities and non-profit agencies to ensure active maintenance of their off-road networks;
 - Obj. 4: Use the PennDOT Connects process to ensure that existing sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure is maintained and, where possible, improved;
 - Obj. 5: Work with PennDOT and municipal roadmasters to ensure timely maintenance of painted roadway markings, including bicycle lanes / sharrows, crosswalks, shoulders, and accompanying signage.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the first goal and objectives.

- Ms. Timochenko stated that she reviewed the goals and objectives and will provide her comments after the meeting. As a general comment regarding all of the goals and objectives, she noted that the Reading MPO does not specifically own trails and the use of the word 'ensure' and similar words should be replaced using words such as 'partner with', 'coordinate with', 'encourage', 'promote', etc.
- Ms. Ahlskog noted that the goals and objectives should maintain a positive tone. She recommended rewording Objective 1 to have a more positive tone.

Mr. Golembiewski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #2: Connect communities in ways that support walking and bicycling as viable transportation options.
 - Obj. 1: Complete gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks and expand both to link residential areas with schools, recreation, shopping, and employment;
 - Obj. 2: Provide safe and convenient access to/from transit stops;
 - Obj. 3: Support and promote biking and walking as legitimate travel modes;
 - Obj. 4: Integrate cycling and walking networks with other transportation systems including transit and multi-use trails.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the second goal and objectives.

- Ms. Timochenko recommended rewording objective 1 to include language relating to coordinating and assisting municipalities and non-profits in completing gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network.

Mr. Golembiewski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #3: Expand walking and bicycling opportunities for everyone.
 - Obj. 1: Design bicycle infrastructure to accommodate different skill levels and abilities;
 - Obj. 2: Work with local governments, where appropriate, to ensure their ADA Transition Plans are updated and implemented;
 - Obj. 3: Improve sidewalk and bicycle access in underserved communities, particularly where it interfaces with transit;
 - Obj. 4: Coordinate with trail agencies to promote connections that expand access to all;
 - Obj. 5: Explore opportunities for bike-share stations.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the third goal and objectives.

- Mr. Golembiewski noted that all of the goals and objectives should include the word 'roll' or 'rolling' for consistency and they will all be updated to include that word.
- Mr. Haymaker suggested incorporating the Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan in the document and potentially somewhere in the goals and objectives.

Mr. Golembiewski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #4: Create and maintain safe bicycling and walking infrastructure.
 - Obj. 1: Reduce pedestrian- and bicycle-related injuries and fatalities;
 - Obj. 2: Work with municipalities to ensure their sidewalk network is well-maintained and expanded where necessary;
 - Obj. 3: Work with trail agencies to ensure trails and access is safe and secure
 - Obj. 4: Target intersections with high pedestrian-crash histories for appropriate safety improvements

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the fourth goal and objectives.

- Mr. Witman noted that some trails are located quite a distance from people or economic centers or emergency service areas. He recommended including promoting emergency phone systems on those remote trails to improve safety. Mr. Golembiewski noted that those types of recommendations will be discussed in the implementation chapter of the Active Transportation Plan.

- Ms. Ahlskog asked if the Berks County Planning Commission has a sidewalk inventory and what type of fields are available within that inventory. Mr. Golembiewski replied that the sidewalk inventory just denotes where sidewalks exist but does not identify if a sidewalk is in need of repairs.
- Mr. Lerch recommended replacing use of the words 'work with' in the objectives to a more positive word such as 'partner with', 'collaborate', or 'coordinate' to help maintain a more positive tone in the goals and objectives of the Active Transportation Plan.

Mr. Golembieski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #5: Support and promote education and enforcement efforts that increase safety for all users.
 - Obj. 1: Increase acknowledgement and acceptance by motorists that bicycles may legally use roadways;
 - Obj. 2: Work with schools and recreation boards to promote safe walking and cycling education;
 - Obj. 3: Include local law enforcement in walking and bicycling education campaigns;
 - Obj. 4: Educate drivers and cyclists of their rights and responsibilities.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the fifth goal and objectives.

- Ms. Showers asked for an example of educational programs that have been implemented. Mr. Golembiewski replied that many years ago, the Berks County Intermediate Unit had received Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding to educate students in their physical education programs on pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Ms. Showers suggested that there should be more education programs geared towards parents.
- Mr. Brown recommended addressing and including the Pennsylvania's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- Mr. Witman recommended addressing online education options that would be geared more towards younger generations that use online technologies and applications frequently.

Mr. Golembiewski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #6: Promote non-motorized options as environmentally sustainable and healthy ways to travel.
 - Obj. 1: Promote increased use of biking and walking for personal and community health and fitness;
 - Obj. 2: Increase biking and walking for both work commutes and non-commuting trips

- Obj. 3: Work with employers to provide accommodation for employees who choose to walk or bike to work

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the sixth goal and objectives.

- Mr. Golembiewski noted that CommutePA works with employers in Berks County to help promote alternative modes of transportation than the single person vehicle.

Mr. Golembiewski reviewed the next goal and objectives.

- Goal #7: Support walking and bicycling options as ways to grow a vibrant local economy.
 - Obj. 1: Promote the benefits of bicycle tourism and spending to local businesses;
 - Obj. 2: Improve walking and cycling access to economic activity hubs;
 - Obj. 3: Improve walking and cycling access and infrastructure within economic activity hubs.

Mr. Golembiewski asked if any members had any comments or recommendations on the seventh goal and objectives.

- Ms. Timochenko suggested adding a goal or objective related to promoting funding options to municipalities and other organizations interested in completing bicycle, rolling, and pedestrian improvements.
- Ms. Timochenko suggested adding an objective somewhere that incorporates the Pennsylvania Active Transportation Plan.

A survey will be available in English and Spanish as part of the initial public outreach. Mr. McGough shared a draft of the public and municipal surveys (attached). He reviewed the proposed questions for inclusion in the surveys and asked for any questions/comments.

- Mr. Witman noted that many municipalities do not want bike lanes because they reduce parking options.
- Ms. Martignetti suggested adding a question to the municipal survey regarding whether or not municipal comprehensive plans are easily accessible and/or available online.
- Ms. Ahlskog suggested removing the word 'major' from question 5 of the municipal survey unless a definition is provided addressing what constitutes a 'major active transportation need'.
- Ms. Timochenko suggested moving the demographics questions from page 7 of the public survey to page 6 and moving the questions relating to Identification of Issues/Problem Areas from page 7 to page 6.
- Ms. Ahlskog asked if the demographic-related questions in the survey were required or if the survey could be submitted without entering information in those questions. Mr.

McGough replied that the demographics questions were optional and that the survey could still be submitted without entering information into those questions.

- Mr. Witman suggested that the public survey should include a question asking which school district the survey respondent resides in. Mr. McGough replied that he would add the suggested question.
- Ms. Shimp and Ms. Martignetti would help distribute the public survey through their email lists and online platforms. Mr. McGough appreciated their support and asked that the entire Steering Committee help distribute the survey when available through their contacts.
- Mr. Golembiewski asked that any additional questions or comments regarding both the public survey and municipal survey be submitted to him via email within one week of this meeting.

Devon Hain reviewed the anticipated ATP development timeline:

- July 2026 – Staff Kickoff Meeting
- August 2026 – Determine/establish Steering Committee
- September 29th 2026 – Conduct 1st ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- October 2026 – Release Public and Municipal Outreach
- November 2026 – Conduct public meeting(s) to gather input on current and potential future issues, and to identify goals and objectives
- December 2026 – Gather and review public meeting/survey and municipal outreach data. Conduct 2nd ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- February 2027 – Conduct 3rd ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- May 2027 – Conduct 4th ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- July 2027 – Conduct 5th ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- August 2027 – Complete draft ATP. Conduct 6th and final ATP Steering Committee Meeting
- September 2027 – Presentation to both RATS Committees and RATS review
- September/October 2027 – Public Comment Period. Provide response to all comments and complete final revisions
- November 2027 – Anticipated RATS MPO Adoption

Devon Hain then reviewed the Steering Committee's anticipated meeting schedule. It was proposed to meet roughly quarterly/bi-monthly, starting with today's meeting, through Plan adoption in November 2027. Devon Hain asked the group if they would prefer to either schedule each meeting individually or use a consistent schedule. After brief discussion it was concluded that the Steering Committee would meet in December 2026, February 2027, May 2027, July 2027, and August 2027 on the 4th Tuesday from 1:30 PM to 3 PM. All meetings would be held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

Mr. Golembiewski then described the next steps of the plan process which focus around public outreach. The public and municipal surveys are anticipated to be shared in early October. One in person public meeting and one virtual public meeting will be held in November 2026.

A final call for general questions/comments was placed; none were received. Mr. Golembiewski thanked all for their time today and their willingness to participate over the next several months. The meeting concluded at 3:00 PM.

*Prepared by,
Amanda Timochenko
Transportation Planner II*

and

*Devon Hain
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BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION