



## NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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### RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

#### Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2009

A meeting of the Rural Transportation Planning Committee was held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2009 at the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission's main office in Ridgway, Pennsylvania. Chairman Matt Quesenberry welcomed everyone. General introductions of the following members and guests followed:

#### Voting Committee Members & Alternates

Dick Castonguay, Sandy Township  
Dave Cook, PennDOT 10-0  
Coletta Corioso, ATA  
Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office  
Christopher Hauser, Continental 1  
Kristin Hullihen, Jefferson Co. Dept. Develop.  
Bob Imhof, NCPRPDC  
Amy Kessler, NCPRPDC  
Deborah Lunden, McKean County Planning  
Karen Michael (Alt.), PennDOT 2-0  
Matt Quesenberry, Elk County Planning  
Vickie Rusnak, PennDOT 2-0  
Dan Salm, Allegheny National Forest  
Robert Shaffer, DuBois-Jefferson Co. Airport

#### Ex Officio Members and Guests

Sara Andrews, City of Bradford OECD  
Kathleen Bobenreth, Courier Express  
Howard Brush, Governor's NW Regional Office  
Tracy Frampton, The EADS Group  
Tom Frungillo, Bradford Regional Airport  
Kathy Reeger, PennDOT District 10-0  
Gretchen Rokosky, Bradford Era  
Michael Roche, McKean Co. Econ. Develop. Office

#### NCPRPDC Staff

Glenna Sherry, Recording Secretary

#### Approval of June 9, 2009 Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked for approval of the June 9, 2009 Rural Transportation Planning Committee meeting minutes, if there were no corrections or additions. **With no corrections or additions brought forth, Frank Hampton made a motion to approve the June 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. Motion seconded by Debbie Lunden and so moved.**

#### 2009 TIP Amendments

Frank Hampton began by raising the subject of the RJ Corman Clearfield Railroad Cluster in Clearfield County that is being funded with earmark funds (\$1 million). He explained that funding for this project would be shown as a TIP adjustment because of SAFETEA-LU technical corrections to the earmark from the 2007 TIP, which necessitated the project being moved to the current program. An

offer has been received to flex this project over to the Federal Railroad Administration to be handled because the majority of the work is railroad oriented, with minimal highway crossing areas. The highway money will then convert to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Frank continued with an update on the 2009 TIP amendments using a 2009 Highway and Bridge TIP Fiscal Constraint Table handout showing amendments and administrative actions completed between June 09, 2009 and August 11, 2009 for both PennDOT Districts 2-0 and 10-0. Handouts also included an executive summary (see attached) with the ARRA PennDOT project status incorporated onto the back page. He noted that, as shown on the Executive Summary, the North Central Transportation Improvement Program balance increased by \$4,522,913 since June 10, 2009. The reasons for this increase are listed in the attached summary.

**Coletta Corioso made a motion to approve the TIP amendments as presented. Motion was seconded by Dick Castonguay and unanimously carried.**

Frank also reviewed the administrative actions for which no approval was needed. He explained that the final figure reached approximately \$2, 728,000, with cost increases of \$640,000 (\$300,000 de-obligation plus \$340,000 in advance construction).

Turning over the Executive Summary handout to address the ARRA project status, Frank advised that those projects highlighted in bold have already moved to let. Projects highlighted included all projects in District 10-0 and all but one in District 2-0 (Janders Run Bridge). Karen Michael interjected that the Janders Run Bridge project right-of-way issue was recently settled and its let date is now September 10, 2009. Frank added that a total of \$27,401,928 was freed up by the influx of ARRA monies. As a result, all fiscal year 2009 monies have been backfilled and only \$1,418,000 in FY 2010 and \$3,375,000 in FY 2011 remain to be backfilled.

For the Committee's information, Dave Cook announced that District 10-0 received one new administrative action just that morning. Before giving the details of the action, he explained that deficient Punxsutawney Bridges were being funded over two years (2009 and 2010). District 10-0 decided to advance 2010 monies (taken from de-obligations and final vouchers) into FY 2009 in order to advance construction funds. This action was taken to prevent a surplus amount of \$279,000 in FY 2009 funds from being lost.

#### FFY 2011-2014 TIP Update & STC Hearings

Amy said the State Transportation Commission (STC) Hearings had been scheduled for the North Central RPO for August 20, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn located in St. College. However, the hearings in both State College and Pittsburgh (Friday, August 21) have been postponed due in part to the state legislative body being engaged in state budget discussions. A draft of the STC hearing presentation for the "State of the Region" was presented.

A couple of different factors are affecting the 2011 TIP update: uncertainties caused by the federal legislation for SAFETEA-LU dollars that are running out in September (possible 18-month extension being discussed) and the Transportation Trust Fund being once again depleted. In addition, the uncertainties caused by the state budge impasse and Act 44 (tolling of I-80), which was rejected by the Federal Highway Administration, will impact the 2011 TIP update.

Amy recommended that, because of the huge backlog of transportation, highway and bridge projects, those projects already on the Long Range Plan should be reevaluated, reprioritized and rescored. She added that PennDOT is running a new bridge assessment tool that could be used to evaluate any state bridge projects that have come in during the past couple of years, instead of fully soliciting new projects. She felt this process was merited because the present uncertainties could very well result in some existing projects having to be cut. According to the schedule, a draft TIP is required by December. Amy asked for the Committee's thoughts on her recommendation.

Matt said he believes Amy's idea has merit as somewhat of a moratorium on new projects has been considered in the past. Perhaps new projects could be accepted but not solicited. Different aspects of this issue were briefly discussed but no decision was made at that time. Therefore, the Committee was asked to further consider the best option for soliciting projects as part of a TIP update and then to contact Amy with their recommendations and/or suggestions. The important thing is to manage expectations about the resources available and what projects we can reasonably fund.

Coletta noted that during the legislative process, invitations to request earmarks are received from our congressmen and one of the questions asked on the earmark request is, "Is this project on the TIP?" She asked what she should do because with no funding for a project, it cannot be placed on the TIP. Amy suggested she place the project on the Long Range Transportation Plan, which is a holding place for projects. There is a section in the Plan for eligible unfunded projects. Earmark requests, as they are funded, can move directly into the TIP.

Amy announced that, as part of our project prioritization process, a new web-based submission form has been designed in an effort to get more detailed information, and identify purpose and need for projects. In addition to basic information, a location map of the project will be accessible on this site. The additional information should help facilitate scoring/prioritizing of transportation projects. A similar web-based form will be designed for CEDS/ARC project prioritization. Amy will email the link to this site to the Committee for their perusal and comments. She asked that particular attention be given to tab three where there seems to be a gap between issues and a need to build in safety elements.

Kurt Barclay, who was very involved in learning how to use this software and in adapting it to the North Central RPO's purpose, added that either Amy or he should be contacted ([amy@ncentral.com](mailto:amy@ncentral.com) or [kbarclay@ncentral.com](mailto:kbarclay@ncentral.com)) should any problems arise while using the site.

#### PCTI and FSRTS Status Update from Applicants

All applicants are moving forward with their projects. One concern was verifying that the Punxsutawney project is on the federal aid system. District 10-0 is working to verify.

#### TIP & LRTP Project Prioritization Process Update

Amy asked that the county planners that, regarding prioritization, make her aware of exactly how (i.e., township convention, stand-alone meeting, etc.) public outreach is going to be approached for the public meeting in each of their counties. It is important that the municipal/elected officials become familiar with the transportation prioritization process and become educated on the use of the new web-based form as a tool for applicants. She requested that North Central be put on the agenda (one-half hour time slot) for these meetings and be provided with meeting dates as soon as they are set up.

She added that the next meeting for the prioritization process at North Central has been pushed back to cut back on travel costs until the state budget discussions have ended. Instead of meeting, the steering committee will be sent a form asking what the “weighting factors” should be for the criteria. The consultant team will then independently compile the results and these results will be one of the main discussion points at the next meeting.

#### Update from Committee Members

##### **Route 119 Committee**

Kristin Hullihen had no news at this time on the Route 119 Committee other than that the next meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2009.

##### **Continental 1**

Chris Hauser reported that Continental 1 has completed its first year under its federal grant to increase public awareness of Continental 1. This grant is being administered by the New York State Department of Transportation and required in the first year that Continental 1 do a complete review of trade and travel corridors throughout the world. The final printed report is due out later this month.

A Continental 1 full board of directors’ meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 21, 2009 in Holiday Valley, Ellicottville, New York. Among the items to be addressed at this meeting will be the hiring of a new executive director, and to hear a presentation from Continental 1’s public relations’ firm on a public relations’ strategy for the coming year. It is anticipated that the search committee will have a recommended candidate for the board of directors to consider.

##### **Public Transit**

Coletta advised that ATA’s current outdated website is being replaced and would be available with new schedules within the next couple of months. ATA will be getting an interactive trip-planning tool using Google Maps in a later release. They had hoped to have the tool ready to roll out with the new website, however, were told there is a backlog of transit projects on which Google is working.

ATA also met with Community Action, Inc. and Potter County Human Services to discuss medical assistance transportation programs, and how public transportation could be better utilized by these programs, and to review potential opportunities for re-engineering of existing services to provide more cost-effective solutions to their medical transportation delivery.

ATA has been revising and implementing changes to its fixed routes and routes with deviation, and has implemented changes in the counties of Clearfield and Jefferson and is working on Elk and McKean.

ATA continues to meet with other partners on the Clearfield-to-State College commuter service.

Regarding the ATA/DuFAST Public Transit Study, Coletta indicated that the study included several projects, including route evaluations of ATA services, DuFAST routes, and a systems coordination study of the ATA and DuFAST. The study made recommendations on service changes for both agencies and concluded there was no duplication of services. While no final report was issued, the Boards continue to meet.

Amy interjected that North Central was only involved in this project administratively through processing of invoices. She noted that one of the handouts was a letter from Amy explaining North Central's part in the Study and a response from Toby Fauver, Deputy Secretary of the Bureau of Public Transportation. She wanted to make it clear that North Central was not involved in this effort or with any of the findings. Her concern was that North Central was the fiscal agency and the study was never completed.

### **Enhancement Projects**

Sara reported that the South Trailhead project has been delayed for bid, due to a change in the entrance from Route 219 required for the Highway Occupancy Permit, and may not be bid until September. Design work is going well on the Community Parks Trail and the project is on schedule to bid late this year or early next year.

Sara said she feels there is still a need for the transportation Enhancement program as it provides a significant benefit in improving the communities in the region.

Tracy Frampton reported that the Wilcox Streetscape project's final inspection occurred last week. With only a couple of minor issues remaining, the project should be completed by the end of the month.

Amy said future Enhancement dollars would include a target allocation, but we do not know at this time what mechanism will be used to access those dollars. A final decision has not been made on whether or not another round of Enhancement projects will occur.

Matt asked about the status of the Wilcox bus shelter. Coletta said funding for the Wilcox bus shelter was included in the Bus Stop Signs and Shelter Program. The Authority was notified that this program would be funded under ARRA; however, PennDOT has not yet awarded a contract for the project.

Coletta added that ATA has submitted a number of capital projects for ARRA funding. Amy asked that a list of those projects and their estimated costs be provided to the Committee. *Since the meeting, Coletta has provided the following project listing:*

	Project Description	Estimated Project Cost
1.	Bus Stop Signs and Shelters	\$ 500,000
2.	ITS, Technology Enhancements and Furnishings	1,900,000
3.	Mobility Management Center	8,625,000
4.	Vehicles for Commuter Route – JARC Funding to be used for this project.	1,350,000
5.	Vans for Van Pool	1,100,000
6.	Four Sprinter Vans	460,000
7.	Additional Terminal/Storage Facilities Development	1,350,000
8.	Bus Operations Support Equipment and Facility Renovations/Improvements	5,175,000
TOTAL		\$20,460,000

### **Johnsonburg Bypass**

Karen said the project is well underway and remains ongoing through the construction phase.

### **Special Studies**

Dick Castonguay advised that the Northwest Clearfield County Transportation Plan has been completed.

Amy noted that the first round of county meetings for Greenway and Open Space Plan has been held. Data collection is underway and being backed up, and the ecological, natural, and hydrologic infrastructure inventories have been completed. A base analysis and ranking of Greenway corridors was recently accomplished and will be reviewed at the next steering committee meeting. Project completion date is June 2010.

The local bridge project includes an inventory to address bridges that are less than 20 feet and locally owned. At this time, approximately 29 of the 31 targeted municipalities have been inventoried for Phase 1. Phase 2 is funded but must wait until the budget impasse is over before it can begin.

## **PA Wilds Planning Team Update**

Matt Quesenberry reported that the next PA Wilds Planning Team meeting would be held on August 27, 2009, with the Planning Team meeting with PennDOT officials immediately afterward. One of the objectives of meeting with PennDOT is to give them a basic overview of what the PA Wilds Planning Team does and what the planning study (carried out in 2007) entails. PennDOT may be able to help determine which of the study's recommendations are financially feasible to undertake. This meeting will include video conference, with a video hook-up for PennDOT District 1-0 and Williamsport.

### Open Discussion

In an update on the LED Signal Project, Amy advised that this project was carried out through LTAP Coordinator, Barry Mayes, for the five counties in PennDOT District 2-0 (Jefferson County is being handled through District 10-0). Barry met with the municipalities to look at upgrading existing overhead signals by changing them from incandescent to LED technology, thereby making them more energy efficient and safe. District 10-0 LED signals have been installed, and District 2-0 signals are out for advertisement.

Dick brought to discussion pending legislation regarding pay for the Pennsylvania State Police. He remarked that when you look at the allocation, some of the funding goes toward police protection in rural areas but the vast majority of it goes to transportation issues most likely for urban areas. Municipalities that do not have a police force would have to pay \$150 a year per capita and Dick believes this could bankrupt small rural communities. He recommended the Committee read this legislation (House Bill #1500) and then contact local legislators.

Howard Brush gave a brief update on the state budget impasse and stated that 250 state employees lost their jobs yesterday.

He reminded anyone who might have projects in the region that time is short, less than a year and one-half to get the projects done because who knows what the next administration's priorities will be.

### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon with the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on October 6, 2009.