



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

651 Montmorenci Road, Ridgway, PA 15853

Phone: 814.773.3162 or 800.242.5872 Fax: 814.772.7045

RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2009

A meeting of the Rural Transportation Planning Committee was held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6, 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**

Joe Barber, Barber Trucking
Dick Castonguay, Sandy Township
Dave Cook, PennDOT 10-0
Coletta Corioso, ATA
Charlotte Dietrich, Potter Co. Planning Commission
Doug Dupnock (Alt.), PennDOT 10-0
Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
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

Ex Officio Members and Guests

Sara Andrews, City of Bradford OECD
Dave Greene, City of St. Marys
Russ Jones, PennDOT
Deborah Pontzer, Congressman Thompson's Office
David Parker, PennDOT Bureau of Aviation
Gregg Sayers, PennDOT
Kristen Vida, DuFAST
Dan Walston, Federal Highway Administration

NCPRPDC Staff

Glenna Sherry, Recording Secretary

Approval of August 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked for approval of the August 11, 2009 Rural Transportation Planning Committee meeting minutes, if there were no corrections or additions. Dave Cook had emailed a request for a correction to page two, paragraph five. He advised that the paragraph should read, "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 the structurally deficient Punxsutawney Bridge was being funded over two years (2009 and 2010). District 10-0 decided to advance 2010 monies (using de-obligations and final vouchers) into FY 2009 in order to advance construction funds. This action was taken to prevent a surplus amount of \$799,000 in FY 2009 funds from being lost." **Coletta Corioso made a motion to approve the August 2009 meeting minutes with the noted correction. Motion seconded by Frank Hampton and so moved.**

2009 TIP Amendments

Frank Hampton began an update on the 2009 TIP amendments using an Executive Summary handout and the 2009 Highway and Bridge TIP Fiscal Constraint Table handout that showed the amendments and administrative actions completed between August 11, 2009 and October 6, 2009 for both PennDOT Districts 2-0 and 10-0 (see attached).

Frank advised that the North Central Transportation Improvement Program balance increased by \$227,179 since August 11, 2009 and this increase was due de-obligations, final vouchers, swap of funds with the SPC, and bond retraction. As part of the amendments, fully funded construction for the Summerville Bridge (#3,937,100 - FY 2011 funding) was a District 10-0 highlight. District 2-0 had three highlights: 1. NC Bridge Contract II – P.E. (\$200,000 FY '09), 2. NC Bridge Contract II – Construction (\$3,479,389 FY '09 & '10), Community Parks Trail – Construction (\$1,134,300 FY '10, '11, '12).

A motion was made by Deborah Lunden to approve the Community Parks Trail--pending clarification on the location of the original amount of its funding. Motion was seconded by Charlotte Dietrich and unanimously carried.

Note: The discrepancy in the community parks fund discussed during the meeting was found in District 10 amendments.

Dave Cook said the Summerville Bridge project located on Route 119 in the Borough of Big Run was originally underfunded. This project is being deferred because additional anticipated funds did not come about and because of issues with FEMA that are currently being addressed. As the project will not be ready to go in time for 2011 money, its funding is being shown for a cost increase on Big Run Arch.

Coletta Corioso made a motion to approve Summerville Bridge No. 1 project amendment. Motion was seconded by Jodi Brennan and so moved.

A motion to approve the NC Bridge Contract II for both the PE and construction amendments was made by Deb Lunden, seconded by Dick Castonguay and unanimously carried.

Frank also reported on the ARRA funding status. All projects that have been approved by the North Central RPO through rounds one and two for both Districts 2-0 and 10-0 have gone to let for a total dollar value of \$34,350,057. Round three will soon begin.

Amy added that one of our biggest challenges in round three would be that projects must already be on the TIP with money attached. That money would have to be moved quickly to other projects by the mid-November project deadline. The Route 6 project east of Coudersport, that still requires some construction funding, is being considered as a potential candidate project for round three of ARRA funding. The project will be emailed to Committee members for evaluation at the end of October or early November. Project let deadline is January 14, 2010.

Frank noted that a total of \$27,401,928 had been freed up by the influx of ARRA monies and, 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.

DuFAST Transit Discussion

Kristen Vida stated that several transit projects needed to be either added to or updated on the TIP. An administrative action is needed. Kristen provided a handout listing the projects and their funding amounts and noted that the first four projects listed were already on the TIP but the funding amounts need to be brought up to date. Ten out of seventeen items on the list were for a joint facility in DuBois shared with the Area Transportation Authority for which costs would be shared 60/40. The last five projects were new projects DuFAST would like to have added to the TIP (benches, non-revenue vehicle, passenger facility improvements, shelter improvements, and miscellaneous equipment). The major funding source for projects on the list would be Pennsylvania TAF (PTAF) and additional funding is being sought. These funds have already been approved and must be spent by June 30, 2012. Frank asked if some of the funding would be coming from ATA.

Coletta Corioso answered that ATA has submitted the projects to PennDOT as ATA does not have access to PTAF, but no response from PennDOT has been forthcoming. ATA's request for this funding may be under a generic line for facilities improvement. Amy asked Kristen how this project could move forward if, knowing funding is a 60/40 split, they have not approved ATA's funding. Coletta noted that some of the requests were submitted late to PennDOT last year, so some of the projects may have funds attached to them that could have come from ATA's resources. She will check on this possibility.

Karen Michael made a motion to approve the new and amended DuFAST transit projects. Motion was seconded by Dick Castonguay and unanimously carried.

FFY 2011-2014 TIP Update

Amy gave the news that the State Transportation Commission (STC) Hearings had been rescheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2009 and were to be held at the Hilton Garden Inn located in St. College. One-page abstracts were due last week but attendance, with a request for a five-minute time slot, is permitted. At this time, she was aware only that our region had submitted one abstract electronically (Dave Greene for the St. Marys Connector project), a western New York person would be testifying for a rail-related project, and a representative of Continental 1 would be testifying at the hearing. In addition, the STC hearing presentation for the "State of the Region" that had been shown at the last Transportation meeting would be presented. The "State of the Region" presentation came from a joint effort by Districts 2-0 and 10-0, Centre County MPO, SEDA-COG, and Amy from North Central. This joint presentation will show the status of our bridges and roads, provide transit information, show aviation and rail, and generally give a greater picture of our area. Written testimony can be submitted until mid-November.

As we are moving into another TIP update, it was decided that memories should be refreshed as to funding available as a region and on what that money could be spent. In order to do this, PennDOT Central's Frank Hampton and Dan Walston from the Federal Highway Administration, Harrisburg Division, had been asked to put together a brief presentation.

Dan Walston began the presentation using a slide show to illustrate the transportation planning process. He said in Pennsylvania, the funding process is a very open collaborative process with the planning partners. The scope of the transportation planning process according to federal requirements shall be continuous, cooperative and comprehensive (the 3 C's). Those involved in the process include the State Transportation Commission, metropolitan and rural planning organizations, state legislators and congress, Federal Highway Administration and other federal agencies, PennDOT and other state agencies, tribal consultation, and the public.

Federal transportation's funding comes mainly through the Highway Trust Fund (amounts can be accessed on the PennDOT web site). Dan explained the importance of the eight federal planning factors in SAFETEA-LU for the planning process and reported that SAFETEA-LU authorization expired on September 30, 2009. Pennsylvania received approximately \$1.6 billion annually through SAFETEA-LU, which was a six-year bill. The Appropriation Act provides funding through SAFETEA-LU authorization and annual legislation by Congress, specifies the amount of funding that can be spent thereby giving obligation authority, and provides cash for reimbursements.

The fact that TIP funding has had a cut was also discussed. Amy reported that meetings are currently being scheduled with the county planners to evaluate all projects on the Long Range Plan at the last update, remove those completed, update the costs, and collect additional information. In addition, the districts will be looking at the current TIP to determine which projects will come off (due to completion) and which projects will need to advance phases.

Dan said there were a number of financial unknowns coming up that would affect both federal and state funding. The type of extension to be received on the new authorization bill is not known at this time because the large bills in the system (i.e., health care) could delay the authorization. On the state side, there is the issue of Act 44. Because I-80 has not been approved by FHWA for tolling, funds will be reduced in July 2010 unless action is taken to solidify funding. This will influence the 2011 TIP update.

Dan continued discussing such topics as funds versus obligation authority, federal-aid fund facts, funding programs and sources, funding formulas and other topics that can be found in the attached presentation document. He remarked that great credit goes to the state and planning partners for aggressively utilizing funds in over 262 projects for a total of \$2.3 billion over the past year. The chair thanked Frank and Dan for a remarkable job in putting together and presenting this informative presentation.

Amy brought the Committee's attention to two documents included in their packet. One document was Appendix 6--Schedule for Developing and Approving the 2001 Transportation Program, for which some dates will change according to arising issues. However, the timeline will be the same and will be used to set up 2010 Rural Transportation Planning Committee meeting dates. The second document was a copy of the Pennsylvania's 2011 Transportation Program Financial Guidance. This document explains how our revenue will function, the needs-based formula used, and our region's totals compared to state totals.

She added that work on refining the project prioritization has slowed because of the budget impasse and the resulting need to save money by curtailing travel. However, a new score sheet has been developed for reviewing projects that will provide more defined information and identify a more specific purpose and need for projects.. The county planners, PennDOT Districts, and Amy have met to look at their county and municipal projects for the Long Range Transportation Plan. Project information is then entered into a database. Meetings have been held with the counties of Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson and Potter. Only Cameron and McKean remain. Once all data has been entered, projects will be prioritized using the score sheets.

In the matter of public outreach, Amy has been attending township conventions to provide direction on how to prioritize based on project importance (route involved, targeted investments etc.), assist them in becoming familiar with the transportation prioritization process, and to provide overall TIP and LRTP education.

Matt requested that any municipality having priority projects bring them to their county planner's attention as soon as they are identified; but first, be certain of each project's priority status.

Update from Committee Members

Continental 1

Amy reported that Continental 1 has recently hired a new full-time executive director.

Public Transit

Kristen reported that one of DuFAST's new projects approved was the facility improvement project on which DuFAST is partnering with a DuBois project committee. The Main Street Program has been working to assist with the project's design application, and an architect has been secured.

She was proud to announce that the DuFAST web site has recently been updated (www.dufast.com).

Coletta advised that ATA has been meeting with CATA out of State College to continue talks about the Clearfield-Philipsburg-State College commuter service. The project has not relieved certain elements requested by PennDOT therefore no Capital Funds or operating funds were awarded its operation. After evaluation, it is believed that this service could be operated without an operating designate, and the only resources then needed would be Capital Funds to purchase the vehicles. Work is continuing to get the final plan to PennDOT for review and subsequent approval. This item was brought forward for the reason that Coletta would like to discuss with the Committee the possibility of leveraging the use of CMAQ funding available for Clearfield County.

The facilities at the Punxsutawney project have been demolished and final documents are being organized for construction of the new facility.

ATA conducted its annual workshop and one of the items discussed was the Human Service Formation Study that was conducted by the state in cooperation with PennDOT, the Department of Aging and the Department of Public Welfare. Coletta noted that primarily what is being done for transportation at North Central is what they want to replicate across the state. That is having a regional organization direct transportation issues. Amy interjected that a copy of this study was previously emailed to the committee.

ATA is also hoping to finalize with SEPTA through the Pennsylvania Transit Authority to piggyback on procurement they released this year for Smart Card technology.

Enhancement Projects

Amy noted that all projects have been completed with the exception of the Community Parks Trail and South Trailhead in McKean County

Sara reported that the South Trailhead project would go to let on October 29.

Design work on the Community Parks Trail is still not ready to be sent to PennDOT. Amy said to keep in mind the project needs to be obligated by December 2009.

The Committee discussed its belief that another round of Enhancements was needed. Amy said although there is a line item set aside for TE, there is no new application round planned until prior commitments are fully funded and completed.

Coletta made a motion for Matt Quesenberry, representing the North Central RPO, to write a letter to the State Transportation Commission requesting another application round for the Enhancement Program. Motion was seconded by Deb Lunden and unanimously carried.

Johnsonburg Bypass

Karen said the project is well underway, and beam delivery is about to begin but there has been an issue with the Bridge on Route 219 in Ridgway not being able to handle the super load. Swank Company has put a temporary bend in the bridge to accommodate the loads. There will also be some traffic stoppage during delivery of the beams. In addition, the movie Unstoppable is causing problems along the beam route, therefore beam delivery is being heavily coordinated.

Special Studies

Greenway and Open Space Plan. Amy said this effort is being coordinated through the North Central office. CDs have been distributed to the stakeholders showing the natural trails, the transportation and the mapping. The natural system analysis criteria are being developed and Greenway activities are being linked back to our core system from the prioritization process. Matt Marusiak will be contacting Charlotte to get the Potter County work group organized.

Local Bridge Project. Phase 1 is complete on the local bridge project. The potential for 924 bridges that are locally owned, less than 20 feet in length and have not been captured in PennDOT's system have been identified. Phase 2 is moving forward and will continue through June.

PA Wilds Planning Team Update

Matt Quesenberry reported that the last PA Wilds Planning Team meeting was held on August 27, 2009. The Planning Team had invited the PennDOT partners to meet with them to discuss the PA Wilds objectives and to try to get some feedback on what challenges they could be facing as they moved forward in the project. Matt thought it was a success in that people were able to meet each other and greatly improve communication between both parties.

Discussion

Update on LED Signal Project. In an update on the LED Signal Project, Amy advised that this project has been carried out through LTAP Coordinator, Barry Mayes. The project was awarded to Bruce-Merriles Electric Company, a firm out of New Castle, Pennsylvania, and they will begin work by the end of October.

A draft of the 2010 Rural Transportation Planning Committee meeting dates will be available sometime in November and will be brought for approval to the December meeting. The proposed dates will then be publicly advertised before the end of the year.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.