

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 14, 2019

10:00 AM

SAP&DC Conference Room

Altoona, PA

ACTION SUMMARY

The following are the major actions taken by the Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) at its regular meeting held on August 14, 2019, at the SAP&DC in Altoona, PA.

1. Approved the May 29, 2019, RTCC meeting minutes as presented.
2. Approved funding the cost increase on the SR 2047 Highway Restoration Project as presented.
3. Approved giving the RPO the authority to apply for ARC funding to complete an updated study on the economic benefits of completing Route 219 from Meyersdale to I-68.

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 14, 2019

10:00 AM

SAP&DC Conference Room

Altoona, PA

MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Commissioner Barry Dallara, Bedford County
- Commissioner Rodney McCray, Fulton County
- Commissioner Jeff Thomas, Huntingdon County
- Commissioner Gerald Walker, Somerset County
- Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
- Tom Prestash, PennDOT District 9-0
- Brandon Carson, SAP&DC

Others in attendance included:

- Ryan Brumfield, ARC via telephone
- Michele Ivory, Senator Judy Ward's Office
- David Lybarger, PennDOT District 9-0
- Anne Stich, PennDOT District 9-0
- Alice Hammond, PennDOT District 9-0
- Brandon Peters, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Agenda
- May 29, 2019 RTCC Meeting Minutes
- Southern Alleghenies RPO TIP Adjustments
- FY 2021-2024 TIP Financial Guidance
- 2021 Program Development Schedule
- UPWP and SPR Work Program Development Timeline
- ARC ADHS Map
- ARC Economic Impact Study: Corridor N Support Letter
- Federal Planning – State Funding Distribution SFY 2020-2021
- Grant Workshop Flyer & Agenda

II. Review and Approval of the May 29, 2019 RTCC Meeting Minutes

Tom Prestash welcomed the committee to the meeting and Brandon Carson conducted roll call. Tom asked the committee to review the May 29, 2019, RTCC meeting minutes included in the packet.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Jeffery Thomas made a motion to approve the May 29, 2019, RTCC meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Barry Dallara seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. FY 2019-2022 TIP Modifications and Amendments

David Lybarger reviewed the FY 2019-2022 TIP Modifications with the committee answering any questions they had. There was one amendment requiring approval. PennDOT opened bids on the Highway Restoration Project on SR 2047, which is old Route 219 into Berlin. There is a cost increase on this project of \$2,130,000. The RTCC recommended approval contingent on PMC approval. The PMC has now approved the project and it just needs final approval from this committee. David explained where the funds would be moved from and assured the committee it would not delay the other projects.

With no further discussion Frank Hampton made a motion to approve funding the cost increase on the SR 2047 Highway Restoration Project as presented. Commissioner Rodney McCray seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Breezewood Freight Safety Study Update

Tom informed the committee the project is coming along very well, and the initial data is in. He introduced Anne Stich who gave the committee an update. The engineer deployed traffic counters and cameras in the area. SAP&DC deployed a few traffic counters as well to provide additional data. The cameras were located at the Tannery Road intersection and closer to the turnpike connector. After 96 hours of recording, 50 – 60 trucks had turned around. This is a significant number but only 1-2% of truck traffic. After collecting data and surveys, the decision was made to put a camera at the Route 915 north intersection for two weeks in July. This also showed turnarounds, some very treacherous. One truck was going up the ramp the wrong way. There were no signs there so PennDOT contacted the Turnpike and they put signs up. There are two main issues being identified, navigational issues/signage seemed to cause a lot of the turnarounds in Breezewood and GPS taking them on Route 30 not knowing about or not understanding the restriction until it's too late are causing the turnarounds farther out. A meeting will be held with SAP&DC staff at the end of this month to review the data and then a stakeholders meeting will be held the end of September. Commissioner Barry Dallara added that he attended the RTCC meeting and suggested that PennDOT talk with the Carlin's. PennDOT responded that they reached out to them, but they did not respond. He recommended they go in person. Commissioner Dallara will give PennDOT their phone number.

PennDOT noted that French Engineering has done a good job on this study.

V. 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program

Tom Prestash turned it over to Brandon Peters who gave presentation on the FY 2021-2024 TIP Financial Guidance. The interstate program has been struggling across the state, and the 2021-2024 TIP allocates a significant investment to interstates, leaving less funding for the Planning Organizations to use on traditional highway and bridge projects. PennDOT has currently identified \$1.2 billion in basic asset management need on the interstates. The current expenditure is \$450 million. The plan is to increase the interstate funding by \$150 million in 2021 and then \$50 million per year until 2027. He reviewed the funding allocations with the committee noting that there is \$289 million less in overall funding across the state. They have shifted the investment strategy to life cycle costs rather than worst first. The current funding cycle will continue for FY 21-22 with the new formula beginning in FY 23-24. He noted the decline in structurally deficient bridges. Bridges will continue to be maintained in the new TIP. Brandon Carson thanked Tom Prestash for his work on the Financial Guidance Committee.

Brandon Peters also reviewed the general and procedural guidance with the committee. The MOU will be discussed at the next meeting. This covers the guidance on the thresholds determining administrative action vs amendment. He reviewed the TIP Development Schedule with the committee answering any questions they had.

VI. ARC Economic Impact Study: Corridor N

Brandon Carson introduced Ryan Brumfield, ARC Senior Transportation Advisor, who was participating via telephone. Staff recently met with him in Somerset to discuss the remaining miles on Route 219 to Maryland. They had a good discussion with action items. One of those action items was to look into an ARC Economic Impact Study. Ryan added that there is over 200 miles remaining to finish Corridor N but no funding to complete it. The NHS began in 1965 with 3,000 miles of highway and is 90% complete. Those with the greatest economic impact are of top priority, and Corridor N is one of those. The cost to complete Corridor N is over \$200 million. The dedicated funding for the NHS ended with MAP 21 so innovative funding methods will be needed to fund these last projects. ARC is working with the states on a strategic plan, which is close to being finalized. This plan includes applying for funding through more innovative funding methods. A study was completed in 2017 that looked broadly at the ADHS and included Corridor N. After discussing this with Brandon and the Somerset County Commissioners, the idea is to expand on the study done in 2017 looking specifically at the unfinished section from Meyersdale to I-68 to determine the economic benefits both qualitative and quantitative that could be realized by completing that section. The benefits of what has been completed will not be fully realized until the entire route has been completed.

Tom added that this is a great opportunity and it is important to apply for any funding that can help to move this project forward. The next step, if the committee agrees, would be to make a motion for the RPO to apply for ARC funding to complete this study. Brandon Carson thanked Ryan for recommending ARC funding to complete the study. The RPO could put the application together and work with the consultant, PennDOT and FHWA to put the study together. Tom added that during a conference call with Maryland, he learned that they have put some documents together and there could be a dual application with Maryland.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Gerald Walker made a motion to give the RPO the authority to apply for ARC funding to complete an updated study on the economic benefits of completing Route 219 from Meyersdale to I-68. Brandon Carson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Jeff Thomas added that there would also be great economic benefits to completing the last 59 miles of Corridor M in Huntingdon County.

VII. 2020-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Brandon Peters reviewed the guidelines for the FY 2020-2022 UPWP noting the most recent changes. In the past, the UPWP was a list of things staff could do, now staff must complete what is listed in the document. Once the UPWP is completed, it will be approved by the RPO at the December meeting, then submitted to FHWA for review 45 days before final approval by January 31, 2020. The FY 2020-2022 UPWP will go into effect July 1, 2020.

VIII. Other Business

Huntingdon County Rail Authority Economic Investigation

Ron Rabena from the Huntingdon County Rail Authority and Bob Reiman from Huntingdon County Business & Industry gave an update to the RTTC at their last meeting. The Economic Feasibility Study is looking at the potential for 600 car loads this railway could generate per month and whether this would be financially feasible. Commissioner Thomas added that they would need at least 15 cars per week for the Rail Authority to remain solvent. This could have a huge economic impact if completed as it would serve the business park. He thanked everyone for letting them know the grants they discussed applying for are currently open, but they have not yet acquired the property. The Economic Feasibility Study is due to be completed by the end of September. The next meeting of the Huntingdon County Rail Authority is next Tuesday. Michele Ivory from Senator Judy Ward's office added that there is currently only one line item for rail in the capitol budget. There is currently the opportunity to add any kind of capital budget line item. They have asked that any submissions be received by the middle of September. Huntingdon County would need to go through either Senator Corman or Representative Irvin's office. This is definitely something the Rail Authority should take advantage of. Commissioner Thomas said he will follow up with her on that to get the details.

Grants Workshop

Brandon Peters informed the committee that staff have been working with Commissioner Lang to put together a Grant Writing Workshop in Bedford County. The workshop will be held on September 26th at the Bedford American Legion. The idea is to offer information to municipalities, non-profits, and other stakeholders on the different grants that are available to them. There are currently 60 registered. A flyer and agenda were included in the meeting packet. SAP&DC hopes to hold these workshops in different counties in the coming years. Michele Ivory added that Congressman Thompson is holding a federal grant workshop on August 27th and Senator Ward is working on one in Fulton County on October 24th focused on state resources.

PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund

Deputy Secretary Granger from PennDOT will be at the Grant Workshop in Bedford to discuss PennDOT's Multimodal program, which will be open from September 9th through November 8th. A 30% match is required, and they are looking for quality projects up to \$3,000,000.

Mount Union put in an application for DCED Multimodal funds. They received an extension on their CDBG Grant and if they are successful in this application, it should be enough to complete the project. Mount Union has set up a meeting with Deputy Secretary Kilko on the 28th to discuss the project. Michele added that this is a CFA project and it is critical they connect with the CFA staff in Harrisburg.

Other Business

Commissioner Barry Dallara asked how they are making out with the MATP change that was passed and then delayed. Tom responded that he does not have an answer to that but will get an update for him. They are still working through those issues. Commissioner Thomas suggested the RPO send another letter voicing our opposition to the change. Brandon Peters reminded the committee that we just sent a letter to that affect two months ago to all of the region's legislators.

Commissioner Dallara also added that he would like to see PennDOT keep laying fiber for broadband any time they can. This is going to make the rural areas more prosperous. Commissioner Thomas added that he spoke with a liaison with the Turnpike and they are only laying fiber going east, not west at this point. It will be years before they take it west.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Thomas made a motion to adjourn at 11:35 AM.

<p><u>NOTE:</u> The next meeting of the RTCC is scheduled for December 18, 2019, at the SAP&DC beginning at 10:00 AM.</p>
--

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
August 14, 2019**

ACTION ITEMS

Date Issued	Action Items	By Whom	Due Date
August 14, 2019	Get an update on the MATP change that was passed and then delayed for Commissioner Barry Dallara.	PennDOT	No date given