

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 13, 2025

10:00 AM

SAP&DC

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 13, 2025, at the SAP&DC in Altoona, PA.

1. Approved the May 14, 2025, RTCC meeting minutes as presented.
2. Approved the addition of the \$13.2M remaining earmark funding from a previous phase and just under \$11M from the statewide reserve of ADHS funding to the US 219 project, and the removal of the two Somerset County culverts from the under 8 ft. culvert contracts and the return of the federal funds back to the SA Bridge & Hwy Reserve Line Item as presented.

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 13, 2025

10:00 AM

SAP&DC

Altoona, PA

MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Vince Greenland, PennDOT District 9
- Jeff Thomas, Huntingdon County Commissioner
- J R Winck, Bedford County Commissioner
- Hervy P. Hann, Fulton County Commissioner
- Brian Fochtman, Somerset County Commissioner
- Andrea Bahoric, PennDOT Central Office
- Lee Slusser, SAP&DC (Alternate Steve Howsare)
- Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC

Others in attendance included:

- Frank Hampton, PennDOT Central Office
- Jim Pruss, PennDOT District 9
- Anne Stich, PennDOT District 9
- Jaclyn Himmelwright, PennDOT District 9
- Keida McElroy, PennDOT District 9
- Janice Streightiff, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Agenda
- May 14, 2025 RTCC Meeting Minutes
- SA RPO FFY 2025-2028 TIP Adjustments
- TASA Timeline
- TASA Guidance and Procedures 2025
- County Construction Progress Reports

II. Review and Approval of the May 14, 2025 RTCC Meeting Minutes

Vince Greenland welcomed the committee to the meeting and Matthew Bjorkman conducted roll call. Vince asked the committee to review the May 14, 2025, meeting minutes included in the meeting packet.

With no further discussion, Lee Slusser made a motion to approve the May 14, 2025, RTCC meeting minutes as presented. Jeff Thomas seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. FY 2025 – 2028 TIP Modifications and Amendments

Jaclyn Himmelwright noted that there have been 26 management actions since the last meeting, two of which require approval by this committee. Most were typical charges caused by low bid inspections and July updates. There are two amendments requiring approval. Anne Stich noted that the first one was the preliminary engineering phase of the US 219 project. This is the last portion of the limited access four lane new construction from Meyersdale to the Maryland border. This phase is currently an active phase with \$13.5M already obligated. PennDOT is requesting an additional \$13.2M to complete the phase. The funding will be comprised of \$2.2M from a left-over earmark from the last phase and the remaining balance, just under \$11M, will come from the statewide reserve of the Appalachian Development Highway System funds. Vince added that Pennsylvania and Maryland met to discuss how to proceed with the project and decided that they would have separate design and construction projects moving forward. Maryland is planning to use the same design firm as Pennsylvania. PMC provided their approval for the project yesterday. PennDOT just needs to get the ESTIP submitted. They requested that Matthew assist with that.

Commissioner Fochtman from Somerset County noted that yesterday he had a meeting with representatives from Representative Reschenthaler's office. Somerset County has a lobbyist in Washington DC trying to promote the completion of the project. Representative Reschenthaler's office recommended that the County, SAP&DC, and PennDOT get together with our state and federal representatives and formalize a game plan and try and get this funding done. Somerset County will be reaching out to set up the meeting. Vince added that PennDOT District 9 is always trying to position itself to apply for grants when they come out.

The second one is the two contracts in District 9 for under 8 ft. culverts. These projects are for pipe repairs that are above what the district maintenance department can do on its own. They are being let as design build contracts. One has three locations, one in Bedford County on SR 2053 and two in Somerset County on US 40. The second contract has five locations, two in Bedford County, one on PA 867 and one on SR 4019; two in Huntingdon County, one on PA 305 and one on SR 3001; and one in Blair County, which is being funded through the Blair County MPO. These have already been advertised and will be let later this month. Two culverts in Somerset County were removed from the

contracts due to their size. The approval today is to remove those two culverts and return the funds back to the reserve line item. Approval is required due to the removal of Federal Funds.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Jeff Thomas made a motion to approve the addition of the \$13.2M remaining earmark funding from a previous phase and just under \$11M from the statewide reserve of ADHS funding to the US 219 project, and the removal of the two Somerset County culverts from the under 8 ft. culvert contracts and the return of the federal funds back to the SA Bridge & Hwy Reserve Line Item as presented. Commissioner J R Winck seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. FY 2027 – 2030 TIP

Matthew informed the committee that the meeting to discuss the Counties priority projects has been scheduled for August 28th. The Local Bridge Subcommittee Meeting will be paired with this meeting as well to go over priorities for inclusion in the TIP. Vince added that PennDOT would then begin building the FY 2027 – 2030 Draft TIP based on financial guidance. The FY 2027 – 2030 Draft TIP would then be presented to the RTCC to review at the end of the year. This group would then give their approval of the FY 2027 – 2030 Draft TIP in June/July of next year with final approval from PennDOT in the fall.

V. Southern Alleghenies RPO Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Matthew informed the committee that staff is beginning to update the Long Range Transportation Plan. This is a 20-year plan that gets updated every 5 years. It is a 30-month process from beginning to end. Staff will be reaching out to members of the RTTC and RTCC for participation in the steering committee. Once the steering committee is formed a kick-off meeting will be scheduled to determine the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan. Let Matthew know if you are interested in participating in the steering committee.

Vince added that with the turnpikes now planning to do something with a high-speed connector, what does that mean for I-70 moving forward? Will it create more traffic? With I-70 aging and speed limited with the curves, has it aged enough to need reconstruction? How do you manage traffic? The region needs to start thinking about that, and these plans assist with that. Someone added that the Turnpike is looking to bypass the Allegheny Tunnel, which will allow the hauling of hazardous materials. The RPO needs to be cognizant of what the turnpike is doing and how it affects other routes.

VI. Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant Program

Matthew reviewed the program for the new committee members. The program opens approximately every two years and fully funds construction projects; no match is required. The program is highly competitive. This committee plays a role in determining what projects are funded in the RPO region. He reviewed the timeline with the committee noting that the application period opened a few weeks ago with final applications due October 31st. The RPO reviews the projects and provides comments by January 23rd. Typically a joint meeting of the RTTC and RTCC will be held where the applicants come and give a presentation on their project and answer the committees' questions. The committees then rank the projects (using the states ranking criteria) and add their comments. Staff is currently looking at the December meetings, preferably December 3rd, for a combined meeting for this purpose. The rankings with comments are then submitted to PennDOT Central Office where a committee there has the final say on funding. The RPO has done well in the last few cycles receiving \$5.7M for six projects. The minimum award is \$50,000 with a maximum award of \$1.5M. Higher awards can be justified on a case-by-case basis for exceptional projects. There are two rounds; the first round is for the larger MPOs and the second round is all applicants statewide. Preconstruction must be completed by the sponsor. This is a reimbursement program rather than a grant. Matthew gave some examples of past awards. He provided an application process checklist for the committee members to pass on to anyone they thought might apply.

There was some discussion about how to score accurately in categories that can be confusing. The committee also previously requested the make-up of the selection committee and received a document listing their positions. Matthew reviewed the list with the committee. Commissioner Winck asked if PennDOT has a trifold handout on the program. PennDOT replied that they do have a trifold that gives many programs with links and there is also a link where the guidelines are available, as well as a webinar recording from July 9th including the questions and answers. Matthew will send them to the committee members. He will also email the slides from that presentation.

VII. Other Business

Saxton Trail Connectivity Study Update

Matthew noted that the final steering committee meeting is this afternoon to finalize the plan. The plan came together very well. Matthew will send a copy of the Study to the committee members and post it on the SAP&DC website.

TOPP Trail ARC Project Update

The project is slowly moving forward. PennDOT will serve as the BFA.

RPO Construction Report

Matthew noted that construction reports for the RPO counties were included in the meeting packet. Let staff know if you have any questions. If you click on the MPMS project number in the corner of the electronic packet, it will take you to the project map

where additional information is provided. You can also register for an account to be able to use additional features.

Vince noted that the Secretary will be in Altoona next Wednesday. There will be a press conference at an active transportation project on Route 36 (Union Avenue).

On September 10th the State Transportation Commission will be in Altoona at the Blair County Convention Center. PennDOT will be giving a presentation, and all of the County Commissioners will be invited.

Commissioner Thomas asked if PennDOT had heard anything from the historical society about moving a bridge to the East Broad Top Railroad to be used as a pedestrian bridge. PennDOT will prepare an update on that.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the Southern Huntingdon School District went through with the \$1.5M. PennDOT received an email that the funding is being rescinded.

Frank Hampton noted that the State Senate advanced the bill for the budget to the House.

VIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Winck made a motion to adjourn at 11:15 AM

<p><u>NOTE:</u> The next meeting of the RTCC will be at a date and time to be determined.</p>
--

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

RURAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 13, 2025

ACTION ITEMS

Action Items	By Whom	Due Date
Assist PennDOT with the submission of the ESTIP for the US 219 project preliminary engineering phase.	Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC	When requested
Send out a link to the TASA program guidelines as well as a webinar recording from July 9 th including the questions and answers. He will also email the slides from that presentation.	Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC	Following the meeting
Send a copy of the final Saxton Trail Connectivity Study to the committee members and post it on the SAP&DC website.	Matthew Bjorkman, SAP&DC	Following the meeting
Prepare an update on the historical society's response on moving a bridge to the East Broad Top Railroad to be used as a pedestrian bridge.	PennDOT District 9	No date given