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## LEHIGH VALLEY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Wednesday, April 5 at 10:00am

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
961 Marcon Blvd., Suite 310, Allentown

### LVTS Technical + Coordinating Committee Minutes

The LVTS Technical + Coordinating Committee met in a joint session on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 1:00am at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Mr. Rebert chaired the meeting.

**Technical Members in attendance:** Michael Donchez, George Kinney, Becky Bradley, Steve Neratko, Darlene Heller, Brendan Cotter, Dave Hopkins, Ray Green, Chris Kufro

**Coordinating Members in attendance:** Becky Bradley, Craig Messinger, Mike Rebert, Dave Hopkins, Charles Everett, Jr., Rick Molchany, Stan Rugis, Ed Pawlowski, John Brown, Owen O'Neil

**Members absent:** Ryan Meyers, James Ritzman, Larry Shifflet, Robert Donchez, Michael Alkhal, Sal Panto, Tom Muller

**Public present:** Jen Ruth, Kerry Fields, Matt Szuchyt, Gene Clater, Ed Hozza, Hayden Phillips, Tom Nolan, Nathan Jones, Candice Williams, Melissa Shafer, Jim Milot, April Niver, Carol Halper, Nancy Wilt, Tina Roseberry, Bob Lammi, Christine Weaver, Matthew Dorer, Tom Petrucci, Chris Howsare, Jay McGee, Heather Heeter, Joe Romano, Richard Young, Matt Malozi, Matt Boyer, Stacy Newcomer, Charles Unangst, Andrew Kleiner, George Lewis, Ralph Eberhardt, Scott Slingerland, Andy Wagaman, Brian Harman, Bill MacNair, Brad Flynn, Gene Porochniak, James Brady, Edgardo Colon, Brian Miller, Erin Willis, Brian Hite

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:** none

#### MINUTES

Mr. Rebert stated that the minutes of the January 30, 2017 Technical Committee and the February 1, 2017 Coordinating Committees minutes are attached. Mr. Cotter made a motion to approve the Technical Committee minutes. Mr. Donchez seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the Coordinating Committee minutes. Ms. Bradley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### NEW BUSINESS

*PennDOT Connects – Presentation by PA Secretary of Transportation Leslie Richards*

Ms. Richards gave a presentation on a new project PennDOT has been working on over the last few years called PennDOT Connects. She stated that for the first time ever, they have a Transportation Investment Plan that's based in metrics. They are making sure that the money invested by the MPOs and RPOs are directly connected to the number of structurally deficient bridges in those areas as well as asset management needs in those areas. That is something the

numbers have never been tied to before but it is very important in tackling these challenges. The Transportation Performance Report shows how they are doing and making sure the investments are where they need to be or show where adjustments need to be made. The PennDOT Road Map is a \$2.1 billion investment in maintenance and preservation of the roads. For the first time ever, there is a concerted effort on the rural roads that have less volume of cars and trucks. There is a lot of initiatives with RAP (recycling asphalt pavement materials) in making sure they can pave more miles than ever before because of reusing products for other projects and extending the area that can be impacted. PennDOT Connects is truly investing in the communities through a comprehensive collaboration. PennDOT Connects is also about mobility choices with making sure everyone has as many choices as they can to get to wherever they need to go, and it all begins with planning. All users are considered who want to ride a bike, walk, ride motorcycles, drive cars or ride on transit. This is happening by building partnerships, collaborating with township and borough managers, making sure to take into consideration economic vision of these communities and where they want to be 5, 10, 15 years from now. Comprehensive Plans will be looked at along with economic development and open space plans will all be taken into consideration to make sure there is full awareness of the community being worked in. They need to make sure to leverage resources appropriately and are delivering projects that improve economic competitiveness, access to work and overall quality of life. Every project on the 2017 TIP that has not already gone through preliminary design will be going through the PennDOT Connects process. Every single project on the 2019 TIP will go through this process. They will be looking for the first time at ITS, for every project, which is real-time data – whether it tells you how many parking spots are available at a nearby transit parking garage, or when the next train's coming or when the next bus is coming. It will take different roles in different projects where each project will have a discussion to figure out what can be done and what can't be done. There will be enough time to talk about it upfront so different funding solutions or grant programs can be discussed. The long-range transportation guidance will be complete in June of this year and there will also be Connects meetings where there will be training and outreach with regards to Planning 360° and Engineering 360°. Better projects are an investment in better communities. Ms. Richards then showcased some projects currently being worked on in utilizing PennDOT Connects. Ms. Richards made a note that for the first time this year in the budget, there is a significant pot of money available for assets to any township, borough or county that is in a county that has activated the \$5 registration fee.

#### **STATUS OF TIP BRIDGE PROJECTS**

Mr. Cotter stated that the last update was presented in October of 2016. There has not been a whole lot of movement in the past 6 months on the capital end of the projects. Still waiting on 16 buses to arrive this summer in June or July. Approx. 20 paratransit vans are replaced annually and the existing contract for those had expired, so once the new contract is signed, there will be a request for vehicles. LANta is also in the process of getting a compressed natural gas fueling facility in the Allentown garage which will be completed in the July/August timeframe. There is a service building which will allow for fair box probing and maintenance of their vehicles which will go into design late summer/fall with construction starting shortly after that.

#### **TIP AMENDMENTS**

None

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### *Population + Employment Projections*

Ms. Bradley stated how we do these projections every 4-5 years for the transportation program. This information is fed directly into our travel demand model so when we do have proposals to add to the Transportation Improvement Program for funding through LVTS, we have to model the effects of those projects. We have just finished revising those using Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) which is the industry's standard for economic projections. Ms. Bradley then went on to show the Projections website which showcases the data from the study as well as interactive maps detailing the population and employment density per municipality. For the first time, all three cities will be adding

more people with an overall growth for the Lehigh Valley at a 25.6% increase. Ms. Bradley noted that the Lehigh Valley has become very attractive for the 55 and older age community because Pennsylvania is one of few states that does not tax retirement income. Top population growth for Lehigh County is the City of Allentown, Upper Macungie Township, Upper Saucon Township, North Whitehall Township and Whitehall Township. Top population growth for Northampton County is the City of Bethlehem (both LECO + NOCO), Bethlehem Township, Forks Township, City of Easton and Palmer Township. Top employment growth for Lehigh County is Upper Macungie Township, City of Allentown, Whitehall Township, Lower Macungie Township and Upper Saucon Township. Top employment growth for Northampton County is the City of Bethlehem (LECO + NOCO), Bethlehem Township, Lower Nazareth Township, Fork Township and Palmer Township. Projected Growth per Industry Sector is suggesting that Transportation + Warehousing (81%) along with Health Care + Social Assistance (62%) as the largest growth. With the Projected Job Increase – Health Care + Social Assistance (31,764) is shown as the largest growth with Administrative coming in at (12,924). Ms. Bradley encouraged everyone to read through the Population + Employment Projections report along with going to the Projections website and utilizing the interactive maps so you can go back to your municipality to discuss how you want the future to be within that community.

#### *PA Department of Environmental Protection Clean Diesel Grant Program*

Mr. Donchez talked about the grant program called the PA State Clean Diesel Grant Program which had a round of funding late last year with only one application which DEP funded, so they are now opening up for another round of funding. The application will open up from April 8<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup> and have about \$397,000 available for clean diesel technology. Eligible project types are exhaust controls, engine upgrades, verified idle reduction technologies, verified aerodynamic technologies and low rolling resistance tires, certified engine repowers, vehicle and equipment replacements, and clean alternative fuel conversions. Eligible applicants include businesses, private sectors, non-profits, school districts, municipal gov'ts along with other state agencies. The decision will be made later this summer on the awarding of grants.

#### *State Transportation Commission 12-Year Program Update*

Mr. Green talked about promoting the 2019 12-Year Program and how the 2017 Transportation Performance Report was just released. This is a snapshot of the model transportation state-wide from highway to bridgework to transit to airports, things that are compatible and viable to the network. There is an outreach effort which started on March 6<sup>th</sup> that goes thru April 19<sup>th</sup> where the public can take an online survey to share their interests, opinions and concerns about the networks within the Lehigh Valley. One tool to use is the MPMS-IQ. It is a map-based software where you can find your county, township or borough to see what projects will be worked on. Any concerns or issues can be submitted.

Ms. Bradley noted that Ben Lee won a contest between MPOs around the state that PennDOT created, where photographs were submitted from around the state. She also encouraged everyone to go online and take the survey to share your interests and concerns within your communities.

#### *New Jersey Bicycle & Walking Summit*

Ms. Burdge talked about attending the New Jersey Bicycle & Walk Summit 2017 in Princeton and wanted to share a summary of the discussions. The first session, "Is That A Parklet In Your Parking Space?" presented by Bike & Walk Montclair, highlighted potential activities in parklets including: eating, celebrating, relaxing, creating, working and playing. Parklets are reutilizing existing parking spaces for a temporary use which increases public space and supports walking and biking opportunities. They can be reactivated seasonally to support downtown activity and provide a platform to local artists for demonstrations. This can encourage people to socialize and linger more which could help boost nearby businesses.

The next session featured "NJDOT Complete Streets Design Guide Summary" update presented by NJDOT and Parsons Brinkerhoff. Complete Streets is a design approach that requires streets to be accessible for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit. It provides equal access to opportunities, safety, physical health and environmental quality and also improves community and economic vitality. A survey was conducted to find which of 4 categories participants identified themselves with in regard to 'Strong and Fearless', 'Enthusied and Confident', 'Interested but

Concerned' or 'No Way, No How'. The participants were broken down by demographics - gender, age, income, education and race. Some of the findings revealed Asians as having the highest percent of 'Strong and Fearless' cyclists at 10%, only 3% of Females as feeling 'Enthused and Confident', and 32% of Gen-Xers along with 41% of White people identify themselves in the 'No Way, No How' category. Most people across all demographics are 'Interested but Concerned'.

The third session was "Real Estate Development + Promotion of Active Transportation," presented by US Green Building Council (USGBC). One of the programs talked about Parksmart, a program promoting the design of parking structures to be sustainable or potentially flexible to future uses. SITES is another program of the USGBC, promoting certification of landscapes to reduce water demand, stormwater runoff and energy use while also providing wildlife habitats, improved air quality and outdoor recreation opportunities. Cities and communities can become LEED Certified and an attendee proposed that LEED green building checklist be submitted with plan reviews to increase pressure to keep in line with standards.

The last session was "Conducting Walkability Audits" presented by NJ Safe Routes to School Organization. Their sample Walk to School Assessment included questions like "Do you have a comfortable place to walk?" "Did you feel safe crossing the street?" These questions and more help to start the discussion on walkability within the community.

#### *PA Vanpool Incentive Program*

Mr. Green talked about the Pennsylvania Vanpool Incentive Program which will provide an incentive to create new vanpools by subsidizing vanpool user fees for a 3-year period. Maximum reimbursement for a standard vanpool is \$800/month and \$1,200/month for ADA accessibility. The contingency is 60% capacity at all times or funding will be pulled and it is noted that this is for working trips only. Users must pay a minimum of \$25/month which serves as proof of membership.

#### *Bike to Work Week – May 13-May 21, 2017*

Ms. Oscavich noted that Bike to Work Week is from May 13-21 and wanted to let everyone know what the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation (CAT) has in store for activities for that week. Mr. Slingerland mentioned that there are about 650,000 people living in our region and we know approx. 1% will ride their bikes on a regular basis which is about 6,000 people. However there are many more people interested but concerned so this program can help in educating those interested people so they have more experience and knowledge on the road. Mr. Slingerland stated that there are 3 parts to the program. The first part is a contest where riders can register online and will be able to track their trips to enter for end of the week prizes. The second part is to share your stories and photos on the Facebook Event Page or website. The third part is to attend the many on-the-ground events being held throughout the region. He encourages everyone to look at the flyer and participate where you can.

#### *Freight Advisory Committee Meeting – May 22, 2017*

Mr. Kinney stated that the next Freight Advisory Committee will be held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and will have a featured speaker, Dr. Allison Conway, a doctor for the City College of New York, who has been working with the New York City Department of Transportation, to put together a policy guidance document on delivery logistics in complete street situations.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

#### *MPO Coordination Rule – Senate Passes Bill to Repeal MPO Coordination Rule*

Ms. Bradley talked about the Senate passing the repeal of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination Rule. The House Infrastructure Committee, with zero changes, voted to send the Senate bill to the House floor. Ms. Niver stated that it has passed out of the committee last week and is expected to come to the floor of the House sometime this month. Ms. Bradley will inform everyone as soon as it is official.

#### *Transportation Summit – June 8, 2017 – Edward Humes guest speaker*

Ms. Bradley stated that this is a joint event with the LV Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee, LANta and the LV Airport Authority in bringing Pulitzer Prize Winner, Edward Humes of the

book called Door to Door. This is an easy-to-read, thoughtful book on the transportation system being multi-modal, letting us know how transportation happens around the globe. She is encouraging anyone who has not registered to please do so.

*LTAP Quarterly Report*

Mr. Hite said that the first quarter this year held four classes averaging 25 students per class. The next set of classes is April 12<sup>th</sup> with Equipment + Worker Safety with 32 students signed up for that, April 18<sup>th</sup> is Pavement Preventative Maintenance, May 3<sup>rd</sup> is Asphalt Roads Common Maintenance and May 11<sup>th</sup> is Road Surface Management. Mr. Hite also mentioned having a local technical assist on May 5<sup>th</sup> with Upper Macungie, Lower Macungie and South Whitehall for the Hamilton Boulevard Corridor project.

*Correspondence*

None

*Courtesy of the Floor*

Mr. Boyer, the Executive Director of Commuter Services talked about the commuter services their organization provides in the surrounding MPOs.

Mr. Rebert asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Molchany made the motion with Ms. Bradley seconding. The meeting is adjourned.

Submitted by,  
Erin Willis, Executive Secretary