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LEHIGH VALLEY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Wednesday, August 2 at 10:00am

LVPC Conference Room

LVTS Coordinating Committee Minutes

The LVTS Coordinating Committee met for its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 at 10:00am in the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's conference room located at 961 Marcon Blvd., Suite 310, Allentown, PA 18109.

Mr. Rebert chaired the meeting.

Members in attendance: Becky Bradley, Rick Molchany, Mike Rebert, Owen O'Neil

Members absent: James Ritzman, Larry Shifflet, Craig Messinger, Robert Donchez, Michael Alkhal, Sal Panto, Dave Hopkins, Tom Muller, John Brown, Stan Rugis, Owen O'Neil, Charles Everett

Public present: Dan Walston, Mike Donchez, Brian Hite, Matt Assad, Ray Green, Matthew Dorer, Michael Dee, Ken Navitsky, Ziad Sayegh, Steve Turoscy, Jen Ruth, Gene Porochniak, Matt Malozi, Ralph Eberhardt, Mark Boris, Heather Heeter, Carol Halper, Jay Finnigan, John Diacogiannis, Gene Clater, Gordon Campbell

MINUTES

Mr. Rebert stated that the minutes of the April 5, 2017 Coordinating Committee are attached. Mr. O'Neil made a motion to approve the Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Dorer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

STATUS OF TIP HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Ms. Ruth talked about the status of the Highway/Bridge projects. US 22 Widening has a let date of August 2022 and is on schedule. They are continuing work with PE phase. SR Route 100 Section 13M has a let date of September 27, 2018 with the design field approved and on-going coordination with Upper Macungie Township about possible inclusion of aspects of their quadrant road project into this project. SR 222 and Shantz Road and 863 Improvements is on schedule for November 2018 let. The highway plan has been approved and there was just a pre-app meeting in June. SR 309 Section 14M Betterment on schedule for a let of February of 2021. Line and grade plans were finalized and sent to PennDOT and they are currently revising it based on meeting held back in April of 2017. SR 309 and Tilghman Interchange is on schedule for a December 2020 let. Alternatives analysis has been complete and is working on line and grade. SR 412 Connector Road has no let date. The project is idle and not covered in the 2017 TIP. SR 1004 Lehigh-Race Street intersection has a let of January 2020. Revised Draft Effects Report was received and is under review. SR 1009-01S Schoenersville Road Corridor Improvements is on schedule for this November. The Traffic Control plans are complete and Signing and Pavement Markings to be completed in the next few weeks. Right-of-Way claims negotiations are ongoing. SR 2020-04S Easton Avenue Corridor Improvements has a let of October 2018 with the design field view is approved conditionally and right now working on a signal traffic control, signing and pavement markings.

TIP AMENDMENTS

There are no TIP amendments to report this month.

NEW BUSINESS

Multi-State Memorandum of Understanding

Ms. Bradley talked about how the LVPC has been working together with all the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the surrounding MPO's in the Greater Northeast – New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Western Connecticut Council of Governments, Connecticut Metro Council of Governments, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, South Central Regional Council of Governments, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, Orange County Transportation Council, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission – who share transportation management zones that overlap, is included in this agreement. In order for LVTS to allocate money appropriately, have good information and build the economy of scale that we need to build in order to do our jobs, we need to start sharing data. We would work together as a northeast mega-region which ensures coordination of plans and decision making in these metropolitan areas. This requires the LVPC to share information regarding the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Modeling and Data, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Transportation Conformity. This is a concerted effort by all the MPOs in the northeast region to come together and further the collaborative efforts when developing products and programs. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC and LVTS operate under the administrative function of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's Executive Committee. There were a couple in depth conversations on how this may or may not benefit LVPC and LVTS and the Executive Committee said that if both LVTS Technical and Coordinating Committees are okay with the agreement, then the executive Committee is okay with the agreement. Mr. Molchany asked about South Jersey and Philadelphia not being on this agreement. Ms. Bradley said that they were asked to be part of this agreement but declined as they are a bi-state MPO already. Mr. Molchany made a motion to endorse the agreement. Mr. Dorner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2017 Earmarks Available for Repurposing

Mr. Rebert stated that this started back in 2016 as part of the FAST Act, moving earmarks that haven't been moving or the funds weren't being used into projects that are being moved. The only earmark in the Lehigh Valley is funding that was available from the Route 222 Trexlertown bypass project for a total of \$13,517 which has been added to the Route 22-400 construction project. Mr. Kinney added that the state did a great job last year in getting into what was available with over 197 earmarks statewide totaling about \$128 million for repurposing with our region grabbing \$2.7 million of that last year. Compared to last year, there are only 17 earmarks statewide this year.

State Route 22 Construction Overview

Mr. Rebert presented an overview on the Route 22-400 construction project. The decks on the Canal Bridge is complete and the beams are all set on the River Bridge, deck pans are in place along with the steel beams. 5th Street Bridge was closed to traffic in early May and has now been removed. Fullerton Avenue is wide open with traffic moving pretty well. 5th Street is a Whitehall Township street but PennDOT owns the bridge so PennDOT will maintain the bridge while Whitehall Township will take back a couple state-owned roads. There was no under clearance on Route 22 for 5th Street or for Fullerton Avenue where there have been some horrible accidents. The adjacent roadways and bridge have to be moved up. Due to the grades, there will be a retaining wall going in on the north side of Route 22. There has been difficulty getting the piers in place where you need 10 feet of solid rock and since we are in a limestone region, it was a struggle to get what was needed. But all the

piers are now in place with the deck in place. Route 22 Eastbound Bridge is on scheduled to be opened in late October so all traffic will be shifted onto the new bridge by the end of the year. Then we start demolishing the old bridge and replacing it, with each bridge having acceleration and deceleration lanes for the Fullerton Avenue ramp so you won't have those short on and off ramps. Mr. Molchany brought up the various discussions held on this project where some say it's a widening to a three full solid lanes on each side while others say it may not be three full lanes of traffic. Mr. Rebert said the goal is to have three full lanes, but there may be designated axillary lanes with a barrier in between so people can come and go on and off the ramps. This design is being taken from Route 378 to 15th Street but are not doing the 15th Street interchange so the third lane will drop there.

LANTA Capital Equipment Grant Application

Mr. O'Neil talked about how LANTA is getting ready to submit a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facilities State of Good Repair and Competitive Rent Program for funding for 14 CNG powered busses. The bus fleet is 83 vehicles with busses lasting about 12 years, so LANTA should be buying 7-8 busses every year to be on a regular schedule of replacing busses as they reach their useful life. They did just receive their first shipment of 16 CNG busses which we will see in service within the next 4-6 weeks with another 8 busses on the way. The grant application asks for a purchase of 14 busses equaling a \$7.1 million grant ask. PennDOT agreed to a 20% match if LANTA is awarded. LANTA is asking authorization for the LVTS to issue a letter of support that acknowledges that the purchase of busses is already on the approved TIP and the LVTS's willingness and ability to amend the TIP to reflect the additional funding for the 14 busses if and when LANTA is awarded the grant. Mr. Kinney noted that this request was made to the LVTS Technical Committee at their previous meeting which was approved to move on to the Coordinating Committee. Ms. Bradley made a motion to approve the letter of support for the grant application. Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Participation Plan Update

Mr. Donchez talked about how during the review of the Public Participation Plan, it was noticed that there are specific items that are PPP and isn't keeping with the current public outreach practices. It was decided that an interim update be made to it. This will be updated and go out for a 45-day public review comment period which will start this upcoming Monday, August 7th and will run thru Thursday, September 21st. In the middle of this 45-day review will be a public meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13th at 4pm at LVPC. This has been advertised in the local newspaper and will be put up on LVPC website. It will be distributed to the typical review locations – PennDOT, LANTA, our offices and the three city libraries in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton. This will be brought back to the Technical Committee for recommendation and then ultimately back to the Coordinating Committee in October.

OLD BUSINESS

LANTA Coordinated Public Transit Plan Update

Mr. Donchez said that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission is working to put together a Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan takes a look at the paratransit service in the Lehigh Valley. It's the van service that provides services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. The current plan was adopted back in 2007 and per FTA guidelines, there's a recommendation to update the plan every ten years. This plan will identify the existing transportation services that are out there – which includes all human service agencies that provide services to their clients – when they operate and how frequently, where they go and how many trips they take, to see what's existing in the field.

We will take a look at strategies identifying transit needs in the two county region and will be prioritizing the services for recommendations to fill those gaps which will all become part of the plan. This plan is important because it serves a certain segment of society by providing public transit trips for them and also because of an existing grant program (53-10 grant program) PennDOT has. This provides funds for the purchase of small paratransit vehicles and associated equipment to various agencies that allow them to provide transportation services for their clients. Right now there's about \$650,000 available to us annually of 53-10 money and PennDOT annually has a grant program that they award that money locally in the Lehigh Valley to different agencies including LANta. Benefits include improving services for those with disabilities and continued eligibility for 53-10 funding. In order to be eligible for 53-10 funds the projects that agencies are applying for to get money for vehicles, they need to address a gap that's identified in the plan. We are in the process of soliciting public comments. There were three meetings this past month – one with LANta's Committee meeting, one at the Lehigh County Government Center on July 10th and the last at Easton City Hall on July 20th – to solicit input into the plan. Some of the gaps identified was the need for accessible taxis, also the effects of autonomous vehicles and the impacts they might have on transportation within the Lehigh Valley. Another is a voucher program for same-day emergency service since right now there is no same-day service. Also the continued use of retired vehicles making them available to other agencies to purchase should they be short of vehicles. Scheduling gaps is another concern. Being able to schedule through personal computers or through iPhones and tablets is something that can be addressed. Also the opportunity to partner and share resources with other agencies and coordinating trips with the medical providers along with educating riders on the impacts of late running appointments and how that has an impact on the system. The next step is to compile this information and taking a look at the existing services, contacting the agencies to find out more information about their services and then trying to match the needs addressed. More information will be given at the future meetings. Mr. O'Neil talked a little about how this update will address the needs of service with a particular topic of same-day service which is the most asked about. Reservations must be made one day ahead, which is Pennsylvania Law. But this is something that is hoping will be changed in the future.

NY/NJ Port Authority – Lehigh Valley Visit

Previously the LVPC has toured the Port of NY/NJ to get a sense of their operations and how their operations can impact demand for freight travel in the Lehigh Valley. The Port Authority contacted us because they wanted to conduct a tour of the Lehigh Valley with their staff, first touring the Pocono area, then coming to the Lehigh Valley. The LVPC gave a PowerPoint presentation on why the Lehigh Valley is so attractive for warehousing and logistics centers for freight travel. Comparisons were shown of similar sized warehousing facilities, one in the Lehigh Valley and one in the greater New York/New Jersey area with regard to what their rental fees cost, what taxes are and other statistics related to the cost of doing business. The significant takeaway on that is the costs are less in the Lehigh Valley then they are in the metropolitan areas of New York/New Jersey. The LVPC took them on a tour of the Lehigh Valley, starting at the FedEx site, then showed them the Fogelsville area of Shantz Road and the industrial parks concluding with Lehigh Valley Rail Management giving a guided tour of the Bethlehem Inter-Modal facility showing their operations. It was a great opportunity to further coordinate with the Port in our ongoing planning efforts and give them a better perspective of what the capacities and capabilities are here and why the Lehigh Valley is seeing such growth in freight. It was a great visit and very informative. Mr. Kinney added that with the lifting of the Bayonne Bridge and the dredging work done, they are taking back the Panama Ship Canal. With previously being able to accept only 8,000 TEU vessels before the bridge was lifted, now they can take 13,000 with capabilities of up to 18,000. Places are needed to store cargo and to move cargo which the Lehigh Valley being

a logical choice with Norfolk Southern's main line running through the Bethlehem Intermodal site and I-78 and I-80 being viable corridors.

Local Technical Assistance Program

Mr. Kinney noted that Traffic Sign Basics will be held on September 28th from 8:00am-12:00pm. The Salt + Snow Management course which brought in some of the MS4 requirements and was sold out on August 1st.

Lehigh Valley Government Academy @ LVPC Office – 5:30pm-9:00pm

Mr. Kinney mentioned that the upcoming LVGA courses are Community Planning being held on Tuesday, September 12th, 19th, and 26th. Zoning will be held on Wednesday, October 4th, 11th, and 18th. Subdivision + Land Development will be held on Wednesday, November 1st, 8th, and 15th.

4th Annual Lehigh Valley Awards Gala – Tuesday, October 17th @ DeSales University

Mr. Kinney encouraged everyone to save the date for the 4th Annual Lehigh Valley Awards Gala coming up in October.

FutureLV – Move Into The Future – Wednesday, December 6th

Mr. Kinney talked about how this Future Forces event will take place of the last Freight Advisory Committee meeting. There will be experts brought in to talk about specific topics and then the hope it to engage into more in depth conversations for the Comprehensive Plan update. Some of the specific topics include Transit, Technology and Automated Vehicles.

CORRESPONDENCE - None

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Clater ????????

Mr. Molchany mentioned how the push in Europe, specifically them eliminating diesel and gas by around 2040. In the Lehigh Valley, there is one charging station in South Whitehall Township. Does the LVTS see using money to explore alternative options or alternative plans for changing from gas and diesel to keep up with Europe? Mr. Rebert said that maybe as the State of Pennsylvania PennDOT but here in the Lehigh Valley, no. That would have to be looked at from a state-wide perspective and FHWA perspective.

Mr. Molchany asked if there is official documents or information that can be given to business men and women who believe the infrastructure improvements are impacting their businesses. Mr. Rebert said to speak to the Right-of-Way unit but that verbiage and information needed can be given. He also said that additional signs can be made mentioning the business district.

ADJOURN

Mr. Rebert asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. ??? made a motion to adjourn with Mr. ??? seconding that motion.

Submitted by,
Erin Willis, Executive Secretary, LVPC