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**Lehigh Valley Transportation Study
Minutes from the Wednesday, August 18, 2020
Joint Technical and Coordinating Committee Meeting
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA
WEB AND/OR CALL**

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Ms. Amofah stated that the agenda and materials for this meeting were posted on the LVPC website. She provided directions on how to participate in the virtual meeting and the protocol to allow the meeting to flow smoothly. Ms. Amofah also stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LVTS held a virtual public meeting on August 18. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Thursday July 8, 2021

Mr. Kufro chaired the meeting.

Mr. Kufro welcomed the members and the public participants and called the meeting to order

Ms. Amofah took Roll Call

Attendees:

LVTS Coordinating Committee

City of Allentown	Craig Messinger (Alt)
City of Bethlehem	Michael Alkhal (Alt)
LANTA	Owen O'Neil
Lehigh County	Rick Molchany (Alt)
LVPC	Becky Bradley
Northampton County	Michael Emili (Alt)

LVTS Technical Committee:

PennDOT Central Office	Brian Hare
City of Allentown	Leonard Lightner (Alt)
PennDOT District 5	Chris Kufro
LNA	Ryan Meyer
PennDOT Central Office	James Mosca
LVPC	Becky Bradley
LANTA	Brendan Cotter

Members Absent:

Darlene Heller

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Paul Carafides, Yvonne Amofah, and Brian Hite

Public Present: Jeff Rai, Matthew Szuchyt, Lee Rackus, Amanda Leindecker, Marta Gabriel, Ralph Eberhardt, Max Inkrote, and Sarah Cassi, Bob Dolan, Gerry Fry, James Brady, Michael Grantner, Kevin Kalman, Heather Heeter, AJ Jordan, Sheila Alvarado, Scott Slingerland, David Alas, Jennifer Crobak, Brian Harman, Brian Miller, Mick Dee, Kim Schaffer, Scott Vottero, Andy Plank, Jennifer Swann, and Jim Maloney.

Mr. Kufro asked members of the public to state their names.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Kufro states that we have new members of LVPC and introduce Paul Carafides as the Director of Transportation Planning and Data.

Minutes

Mr Kufro asks for approval of the minutes with Chair of the Technical Committee Mr. Cotter. Mr. Cotter states that we held our last committee meeting on June 16, 2021. Ms. Amofah notes the actions voted on the technical June 16, 2021 meeting.

- Minutes from February 17, 2021
- PennDOT Eastern Region, Regional Operations Plan
- Cancellation of May 19, 2021 Technical LVTS meeting
- Adjournment

Mr. Cotter ask for a motion to approve the minutes from the joint technical and coordinating committee meetings on June 16, 2021. Mr. Mosca makes the motion for approval, seconded by Mr. Lightner. Mr Cotter asks if there are any questions or comments from the members and the public. Hearing none, Mr Cotter asks Ms. Bradley to call for a vote, the motion carries.

Mr Kufro thanks Chairman Cotter and moves on to the coordinating committee. Ms. Amofah notes the actions voted on the June 16, 2021 coordinating meeting. Mr. Kufro asks for a motion to accept the coordinating minutes. Mr. Molchany makes the motion, seconded by Mr. Messinger. Mr. Kufro asks if there are any comments or question from the members or the public. Hearing none, Mr. Kufro calls for a vote, Ms. Bradley calls the vote, the motion carries.

Old Business

INFORMATION ITEM: PennDOT District 5-0 Transportation Alternatives Set Aside and Multimodal Project Status Report

Mr. Kufro noted that the PennDOT District-5 Multimodal Project Status Report could be found on page 8 of the packet.

INFORMATION ITEM: PennDOT District 5-0 Highway Projects Report

Mr. Vottero highlighted the items; US 22 Widening due to lack of funding will be broken up into sections. Environmental clearance will be completed for the entire limits of the project. SR29/Cedar Crest Boulevard estimated let date to be August 11, 2022 but may be pushed back due to COVID. CE review is ongoing, and the safety and design field view submission is in. SR 145 MLT 7th Street Multi-Corridor Project estimated let date is April 1, 2027 with Historic Review and Phase I and II Archaeology review and pavement design are all under review. SR145 Section 14S Route 145 Signal Improvements estimated let date of August 11, 2022 may be delayed due to COVID related delay in traffic Data Collection. SR 145 Section 13S Route 145 Safety Improvements estimated let date of December 8, 2022 with final design notice given in

June 2021. SR 309 Section 14M Betterment estimated let date of April 1, 2027, is in final design with work being completed on utility and stormwater. SR 309 and Tilghman Interchange estimated let date of October 20, 2022 has recorded the Right-of-Way Gap Plans and preparations to submit the permits to the Army Core of Engineers- hazard waste has started. SR 1004 Lehigh-Race Street Intersection estimated let date of December 9, 2021 will possibly be delayed due to ongoing railway coordination. SR 1017 Section 02S Mauch Chunk Signal Improvements estimated let date August 11, 2022 with the project in MPE and environmental clearance and safety review complete. Easton Two Way Street Conversions estimated let date August 12, 2021 was changed to October 2021 due to signal review comments by the traffic unit. SR 22 Section 03M 22 from Farmersville Road to 512 estimated let date April 14, 2022 is in final design with utility right of way being completed. SR 248 Section 05S Route 248 Realignment estimated let date March 3, 2022 will possibly be delayed to late 2022 due to environmental review delays. Final design has begun, but right of way is not complete. SR 248 Section 06+S Route 248 Signal Improvements estimated let date December 8, 2022 with preliminary signal design and safety submission complete. Mr. Hopkins asked if the US 22 project was put on hold indefinitely and if that's the case why are we still proceeding with work on it? Mr. Vottero responses, that right now we're in the preliminary engineering stage where if we don't finalize this project, we would have to pay back the money to PE. What we are trying to do is to put together the next TIP we will start to look at that in the next month or two. We will look to see if we can put this on the Long-Range Plan and see if we can find funding sources to do small pieces of the project. Also, to see if any additional funds can become available. One of the things I mentioned before is that we do have the 5th street bridge, we would like to clear the entire projects environmental and then get that project going. That project does not have independent utility which FHWA does look for. That project should not be an issue. We should have the funds to fund that and then look for future phases if we break it up into three-pieces. That is to be determined, we'll get that started as we put the TIP together to see if we can start funding any piece of this large project into smaller pieces. Question from a member of the public- did the LVTS allocate funding for CE? Mr. Vottero, I don't recall that. CE has been ongoing for some time now. CE is very close to having environmental clearing for the whole project. Mr. Kufro stated that what Mr. Vottero is referencing to is CE that is all still ongoing so there are still some aspects of that are continuing and part of that is looking at how this could be broken up into smaller pieces. We did already have to break out projects that are active like 5th Street and Route 145. But final design and construction are not funded on the TIP. So, when we meet in the next few months to put together the TIP we're hoping to have some option for some smaller break out projects that maybe possible. But as you indicated the big project is not on there yet. Mr. Molchany says However, the infrastructure funding that is coming to this project is extremely important to the Lehigh Valley and I will be bring this project back to the table. Mr. Kufro says yes, it is a very important project so that's why we are telling the consultants to look at how this project can be broken up into smaller pieces to get this moving again. That's something we can discuss as we start planning for our draft TIP.

INFORMATION AND ACTION ITEM: PennDOT District 5-0 TIP Transportation Improvement Program Modifications

Ms. Ruth reviewed the 13 Administrative Actions and 1 Amendment.

- Amendment Action #1

Ms. Ruth indicated that the MacArthur Road Resurfacing, quarter mile south of Grape Street to SR 329, is a low-cost bid increase of \$2,100,846.00. The Amendment consists of programming

de-obligated project funds from the construction phase of the US 22 Resurface 309 to I-78 Split project, the construction phase of the Freeway Service Patrol project, the construction phase of the Race Street Resurface project and the construction phase of SR 1015 over Martins Creek project; the adjustment of funds from Urban Reserve Line Items and LVTS Highway & Bridge Reserve; and de-obligations returned to the region for the final design phase of Wire Mill Bridge and the preliminary engineering phase of the US 22 Resurface 15th Street to SR 309 project for the increase of \$2,100,846 of construction federal funds to meet the low bid awarded on July 22, 2021.

Mr. Kufro anyone or any member with any question for Jen?

Question, from member of the public, can I ask how many bids were received? Because that seems like a huge increase based on the original budget.

Mr. Kufro stated that there is a process in which we review them and speak with the contractors to find out what items are high. If we feel there is value into going to a re-bid, we will. The situation doesn't appear to have that indicated that we would have to go to a re-bid. To see if we would see a substantial savings. Ms. Ruth says there is a total of four bidders. Mr. Kufro asks Ms. Ruth what was the next highest bid? Was an additional \$420,000. Mr. Kufro says there are situations where some folks may see they have left money on the table, so in a re-bid we could end up paying more in the end. Ms. Ruth states that the biggest driver on this is the cost of asphalt. Mr. Kufro asked for any other questions from the public. Hearing none, a vote is called. Mr. Cotter asks for a motion by the Technical Committee to approve the TIP amendment. Mr. Lightner recommends approval pending PNC approval. Mr. Mosca seconded the motion, Ms. Bradley calls for a vote, motion carries. Mr. Cotter asks for a motion from the coordinating committee. Mr. Molchany motions to approve, seconded by Mr. O'Neil. Ms. Bradley calls for a vote, motion carries.

INFORMATION ITEM: Monthly Traffic Report

Mr. Hite provided the details of the mid-year traffic count update. Total vehicle counts at the two continuous counter locations, I-78 East of Route 33 and Route 309 North of Coopersburg, have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels with an increase in truck traffic.

New Business

INFORMATION ITEM: Infrastructure Funding

Mr. Hare provided updates on the Transportation Revenue Options Committee, the PennDOT Pathways program, and the Federal Infrastructure Bill.

Mr. Hare stated that the Transportation Revenue Options Committee (TROC) focused on options to replace the gas tax. The Transportation Revenue Options Commission report was due to the Governor desk by August 1st, 2021 which was delivered by that date. There were eight working group sessions addressing multimodal revenue sources, transit revenue sources, mileage based user fees, tolling and taxing scenarios and other options that were highlighted. The stark reality is the PennDOT's \$8.8 billion budget must more than double to \$18.15 billion to adequately meet the overall needs of our infrastructure. There is currently a \$9.8 billion state level funding gap growing each year. The report was tasked to find a fair, feasible and reliable future looking alternative to the Gas Tax. To pay for all transport modes not just highway and bridges. The overall proposed funding sources is an integrated set of option to address those identified needs, there is dollar targets for each phase, and it is a step towards addressing those most critical needs and establishing stability and predictability for future revenues for the department. The point outlined in the final report is that individual components of the project

where not implemented resulting in funding gaps which need to be closed with other sources. Looking at road user charges, such as mileage based user fees, electronic vehicles user fees, or other options. Mr. Molchany asked, have we engaged with other states to find out what other source of revenue they have? Mr. Hare responded that there was a lot of engagement, outreach, and research by the committee to other states. Mr. Hare asks Ms. Bradley if she has anything to add. Ms. Bradley stated that the committee received a lot of education on this and about what other states are doing right now. They are basically looking at the same thing that Pennsylvania is looking at right now in slightly different lenses. All this stuff is happening in real-time all around the country. The most interesting one in the short term is the package fee when you buy things online. New York has moved forward with that and Oregon. So, the more we order online the more vehicles there are. Whether its delivery van, tractor-trailers or personally vehicles, some people are delivery things out of their personal vehicles. So, putting a fee onto the consumer to then cover a portion of their impact partially those of infrastructure is a very important short-range option. Mr. Molchany stated that the legislature has not been favorable to alternative funding. How will we reach out to them? Will it be as a committee or individually? In an effort that we all will hear about. As we all become experts on opportunities. Ms. Bradley replied, in my opinion and as an LVTS member, I believe as they go forward with implementation groups should take an educational component and make a statement to our local delegation. This is because not all of them understand how it works because the transportation funding is complicated. We cannot stop with the education and advocacy because it is critical to us getting funding for the Long-Range Plan. This ultimately is the trick to getting things done.

Mr. Hare detailed that Pathways are PennDOT's efforts to move forward for alternative funding for highways and bridges specifically. The current budget for highways and bridges is \$6.9 billion and \$15 billion is the needed amount of funding. This means there will be a shortfall in revenue of \$8.1 billion. This means we have limited resources to take care of our aging infrastructure. The cost of this is increasing repairs costs, poor road conditions, rising congestion and wasted fuel costs. Pathways looks at near and long-term funding solutions for our highways and bridges. The Department has been investigating and analyzing short-term funding solution for highways and bridges, planning and environmental linkages or the PEL study. The PEL Study serves as living document and guide as to how we move forward in implementing these solutions in the future. The PEL study looks at all the opportunities for the future to generate funding sources. The PEL study analysis the framework for how we execute those options. Scott Slingerland asked, is there a forecast for freights going to electric vehicles? It's a focus in the Federal legislation. Ms. Bradley stated that Mack Trucks has developed an Electric Vehicle for trash collection. There are two being tested in New York City. Last week I spoke to Mack Trucks. They are developing seven more after the success of the first two. We all know they are working on an EV Tractor- Trailor, plus long-haul trucking vehicles. The fact the Pennsylvania companies are innovating in this field is an important part of the conversation. A member of the public asked if we can get a quick response from the district office relative to non-limited access roads, what percentage of TIP funds funding goes to I-78, US 22, State Route 33, and other limited access highways? Mr. Vottero responded, first I-78 is a part of the Interstate system, so that would be a part of the interstate programs. So, there's no regional money going onto the interstate specifically. But US 22 and SR 33 are both high level regional roads and they qualify for federal funds, but I don't know, I would have to ask Jen to see how much money we spend in a four-year period on a TIP versus the total budget. Generally

speaking, a high-level road like that we accept federal money. When we accept federal money, they expect a certain level of metrics to be met on the higher-level roads.

Mr. Hare provided an update on the Federal Infrastructure Bill and the \$550 Billion in new federal investments in America's infrastructure over the next five years. The Bill was passed by the Senate on Tuesday August 10th and it now goes to the House for their approval when they return on September 20th.

INFORMATION ITEM: Statewide Long-Range Plan and Freight Plan Update

Mr. Hare stated that the Department continues to work on both documents and is working to finalize drafts of both documents. There will be a 30-day review of our Long-Range Transportation and Freight Plans in mid-September. An announcement will be sent to LVTS and LVPC.

INFORMATION ITEM: Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance Multi-Region Freight Plan

Mr. Carafides stated that the plan is at the beginning stages of development and that the updated plan will take a multi-regional view of freight. As such, a group of five MPOs came together to form the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance - Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization (LLTS), Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO), Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVPC/LVTS), Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA MPO), and Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS). The group will look to develop a freight plan which addresses the opportunities and challenges posed by this industry, especially as it relates to mobility, safety and infrastructure system maintenance and improvement. The Freight Alliance anticipates developing a plan that coordinates all modes for freight travel to create a robust mega-regional transportation network that is safe, convenient, and efficiently accommodates the growing industrial sector without jeopardizing system mobility, reliability, or security. The group is currently working to create an MOU and funding agreement between the 5 partner agencies, and we are also currently gathering information and ideas from each partner agency and preparing a scope of work to create an RFP. As we complete the administrative logistics of the project and hire a consultant, we will return to work with the LVTS to ensure the project moves forward.

Public Engagement and Participation

Mr. Assad stated that the last Business Cycle column, which published Sunday, July 18, can be found in the packet. In it, Becky details how not every transportation project has to cost tens of millions of dollars to have a big impact in the community. The mid-year BuildLV Report, scheduled to be published on August 29, details the housing and industrial growth in the Lehigh Valley and the strain it could potentially put on the transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Assad detailed the July 5 Plan Lehigh Valley WDIY radio show which covered the TASA and Tech Assist programs, and how they provide an important investment in this new vision for a healthy transportation system. The most recent show on Aug. 2 show covered the BuildLV: Mid-Year development report which detailed a very busy first half of the year in housing and industrial development. The next show will take a close look at reuse and redevelopment and will include guest appearances by developers JB Reilly and Mark Mulligan. That show won't air until 6:30 pm, September 6, on WDIY 88.1 FM. All the past shows are currently streaming at wdiy.org.

Mr. Assad detailed the upcoming Transformative Talk titled Today's Planning: What Local Governments Need to Know. This is really something that can benefit every community, developers, engineers and really anyone who has to navigate the planning process. This will be Thursday August 26, from noon to 1 p.m., and anyone can sign up for the virtual webinar at lvpc.org/events.

Mr. Assad detailed LTAP's full schedule of virtual classes right through September. The classes are all free and you can still sign up at lvpc.org/ltap or call Brian Hite.

Adjournment

Mr. Kufro any questions? Hearing none, Meetings are anticipated to be held virtually LVTS Technical Committee, September 15, 2021 @ 9:00 AM. LVTS Joint Technical and Coordinating Committees, October 20, 2021 @ 9:00 AM.

I will ask for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Molchany makes the motion, seconded by Ms. Bradley. Motion carries.

Submitted by:
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director
Yvonne Amofah, Program Associate