

MINUTES

**SHENANGO VALLEY AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

HYBRID MEETING

MERCER COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

**2491 Highland Road
Hermitage, PA 16148
Conference Room**

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 – 10:30 AM

PRESENT

Jeremy Coxe, Chair
Timothy McGonigle, Commissioner
Daniel Gracenin, Executive Director/Secretary
Doniele Russell, Executive Director
Brian Barnhizer, Senior Planner
Christopher Conti, Senior Planner
Peter Messina, Planner
Brandon Leach, Transportation Planning Specialist
Julia Cornell, Transportation Planning Specialist
Dax Nulph, Assistant Executive
Thomas McClelland, Assistant Executive
Courtney Lyle, Project Manager
Mark Nicholson, Project Manager
Sara Tassone, Transportation Planning Specialist
Kenana Zejcirovic, Community Planner
Dale Perry, Supervisor
Robert Lark, Supervisor
Jasson Urey, Manager
Shawn Anderson, Manager
Cindy Black, Secretary/Treasurer
Jason Tomko, Finance Director
Steven Theiss, Public Resident

REPRESENTING

City of Hermitage
Mercer County
MCRPC
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MCRPC
PennDOT
PennDOT
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PennDOT D 1-0
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FHWA
Shenango Township
Borough of West Middlesex
Town of Greenville
City of Farrell
Wilmington Township
City of Sharon
City of Sharon

1. **Mr. Jeremy Coxe, Chair**, called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. **A quorum was present.**
2. **Approval of Minutes of the June 25, 2024 and September 10, 2024 SVATS MPO Coordinating Committee Meetings.**
 - A. Because there was not a quorum at the September meeting, the notes from that meeting are not classified as formal minutes. Therefore, no vote was taken on minutes from the September meeting. The motion was made to pass the minutes from the June meeting by **Mr. Dale Perry**, and seconded by **Mr. Tom McClelland**. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **2023-2026 TIP and 2025-2028 TIP Modifications/Administration Actions, and FY 2025 STIP Amendment - Mr. Brandon Leach, Transportation Planning Specialist, PennDOT, Center for Program Development and Management (CPDM):** *Information on these items is available on the MCRPC Website (mcrpc.com) on the "Transportation" webpage.*

A. 2023-2026 TIP: Administrative Actions

- I. **Administrative Action #1** - This action moved **\$20,000** in STU funds from the **FY 2025 Construction (CON) Phase** to the **FY 2025 Preliminary Engineering (PE) Phase** for the **Service Avenue Bridge Project** in Sharon.
 - a. Mr. Leach noted that Mercer County will not receive STU and/or TAU funds going forward because of the loss of TMA status.
 - b. There was no further discussion.
- II. **Administrative Action #2** - This action moved approximately **\$101,700** from the **Mercer Highway/Bridge Line Item** to the **FY 2024 Con Phase of the SR 18-SR 358 Mill Hill Road Project**
- III. **Administrative Action #3 - Lorenwood Drive/South Darby Road Trail Project:** This is an action to add the construction phase to Lorenwood Drive/South Darby Road Trail Project .Mr. Leach described this as an addition to a Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) agreement. This project has received MTF funds in the amount of \$380,500, plus a local match of \$136,500. These are funds that come from the FY 2025 Statewide Multimodal Reserve Line Item.

B. FY 2025 STIP Amendment

The 2025 STIP has been amended to move **\$153,000,000** to the statewide **Special Initiative Reserve Line Item**. Cash flow money from seven projects has been moved to **Special Initiative Reserve Line Item** in order to move the funds to SEPTA projects. On November 22, 2024, Governor Shapiro announced that in order to prevent SEPTA from facing dire budget cuts, it is necessary to move the funds. Among the impacted projects is the **I-79 Interstate Project in Mercer County**, from which **\$10,000,000** is being moved to the new **line item** so it can be used for SEPTA projects. The **I-79 Interstate Project** includes 14.95 miles of 2.5" mill and inlay (shoulders may be preserved) in multiple townships in Mercer and Lawrence Counties. Currently, the bid date for the first phase of the **I-79 Interstate Project**, scheduled for January 1, 2027, has not changed, but it is possible that it will change in the future. There was discussion, but it is unlikely that the **FY 2025 STIP** can be amended again in order to keep the funds in Mercer County.

C. 2025-2028 TIP Modifications/Administrative Actions

There was a total of 41 administrative actions to align the 2025 TIP with the 2023 TIP and make sure the funding is showing accordingly.

- a. Administrative Action 1 and 2, the Hossack Road Bridge and Gilmore Road Bridge cost increase required CPDM approval. The increase was just over \$1,300,000.

- b. Administrative Action 9 was to move the HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funding from the State Route 518-25 interstate project in the federal fiscal year 2025 onto two other HSIP projects. Pa-18 to State Route-4006 intersection and US-62 to State Route-3037 intersection improvement.
- c. Administrative Action 10, we are taking money from the Mercer Highway Bridge line item in 2026 and then realigning that cash flow for the State Route 518 2025 intersection project out one year. This will keep the project fully funded over two fiscal years instead of one year and allows for the HSIP money to be added to those other two projects in action 9.
- d. Mr. Dale Perry asked about safety and how it is reviewed by PennDOT. Mr. Tom McClelland highlighted that safety is always a priority for PennDOT, and that all new projects include safety measures. He reminded the group about informational boards, anti-skid surfaces, and noted that while there is always room for improvement, PennDOT cannot account for severe weather events and human error.

4. **Safe and Accessible: Complete Streets Policy (Peter Messina & Chris Conti, SVATS MPO)**- Peter presented the plan and highlighted the scoring sheet for the committee. Dale Perry made a motion to approve the Policy as presented and seconded by Bob Lark. Motion carried.

5. **Discussion & Approval of the 2025-2027 UPWP (on condition of incorporation of recommendations, if any, from PennDOT, FHWA, and FTA) (Dan Gracenin & Donielle Russell, SVATS MPO)**

Mr. Daniel Gracenin briefly described the 2025-2027 UPWP noting the financial portion of the plan is critical to outline the office workflow over the time period. Dan discussed the financial breakdown:

Total Budget is \$163,063

Federal PL (Highway)- \$108,400 Federal MPP (Transit)- \$22,050 State MLF- \$13,141

Local Hwy- \$13,959 Local Transit- \$5,513

He noted two work items:

- *Traffic Counts Line item*: PennDOT counts will cease to be conducted by SVATS MPO. Local counts will be done upon request as long as the equipment remains functional.

6. **Special Programs: Safe and Accessible**

This action completes the Complete Streets Policy. The motion to approve the plan as presented by Mr. Peter Messina was made by Bob Lark, and seconded by Mike Nashtock. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **2025 Safety Performance Target Setting (SVATS MPO Staff)-Brandon Leach**

Brandon presented two charts: one for state targets and the other for Shango Valley MPO targets. He explained that many MPOs in the state have adopted the statewide numbers to ensure compliance, though anomalies due to COVID-19 are still present.

The motion to adopt the 2025 Safety Performance Targets was made by Tom McClelland and seconded by Bob Lark. The motion carried unanimously.

8. **Project Update Summary**

A. **STU and TA Projects (SVATS MPO Staff) Brian Barnhizer.**

- i. The McKinley Avenue Bridge Replacement Project in Mercer Borough- PennDOT has completed the design of a Cast-In-Place box culvert that will replace the existing steel I-beam structure. PennDOT is also preparing permit paperwork that will be submitted to the DEP in the near future, and in

addition, expects to begin right-of-way meetings with adjoining property owners. Finally, the Borough has a consultant on board who is working on the sanitary sewer line relocation.

- ii. The Route 58-18 intersection project in Greenville- Construction began on the project at the beginning of Fall. A significant amount of pavement base repair was completed, and a temporary wearing course was laid to improve the ride over the winter. Utility relocation work will be ongoing for the next several months.
- iii. The Third project is the Springfield Township SR 208 Multimodal Path Project, Phase Two-The project was completed last summer.
- iv. The 4th project is the Service Avenue Bridge Replacement Project in the City of Sharon- An engineer with Herbert, Rowland, and Grubic, Inc. (HRG), the consulting firm for the project, informed me that HRG has been coordinating with PennDOT and the PA DEP to make sure that both departments have all required information needed to move the project forward. Other technical background work is ongoing.
- v. The fifth project is the East State Street/Pine Street Project in Sharon- HRG is also the engineer for this project. HRG expects to have a Let Date in January 2025 and anticipates issuing a Notice-To-Proceed next April.
- vi. The next two projects are related since they were submitted as a joint effort:
 1. Sharpsville's High Street Project- An engineer with the EADS Group, the engineering firm, informed me that the project has been completed.
 2. Kelly Road Project in the City of Hermitage-The planning director for the City of Hermitage informed me that work on the project is complete but for the finalizing of some paperwork and inspections.

B. Major Projects/Other TIP Projects (Mark Nicholson, PennDOT D-I) (Mark Nicholson, PennDOT D-I)

- i. 518 Paving Project through Sharon and Sharpsville- Bids will be opened this Thursday. Construction is expected to start in the Spring 2025.
- ii. I-80 Reconstruction from Ohio line to mile marker five- The PS&E package is being reviewed and planned to advertise for seven weeks starting Thursday. The Let is scheduled for January 30, 2025. This project is expected to take two years to complete.
*In late 2027, miles 11 to 15 will be Let and done in 2028/2029. In late 2029 miles 6 to 10 will be Let and will be done in 2030/2031.
- iii. Lamor Road/State Route 3020 Joy Cone project- The bid packet is being created and is scheduled to be advertised in late January 2025. The Let is being planned for February 2025.
- iv. Blacktown/SR 2006 Bridge- This project is a rehabilitation not replacement is scheduled for Let in April 2025.
- v. State Route 718 from Bank Road to River Road- This project is moving into final design and is scheduled for Let in April 2025.

- vi. Old Mercer Road- This project is currently open for public comment and will be closing at the end of next week and will be moving into the final design phase after the first of the year. The Let is scheduled for September 2025 with construction in Spring 2026.
- vii. 718BO6 Bridge Replacement- This bridge is south of the roundabout in Sharon. This project is moving into final design and working on finalizing the right-of-way plan. It is scheduled to Let in November 2025.
Mark noted that a recent bridge inspection showed deterioration on the outer beams. To address this, temporary pavement markings and guide rails will be used to keep trucks off the affected beams.

C. Planning and Data Collection Updates- Brian Barnhizer

- i. 2024 Traffic Counts: PennDOT & expected Municipal counts- Brian noted we did 50 sites in 2024. Reminder to the committee we won't do PennDOT counts in 2025 but we can still do local counts upon request to the office. Tom McClelland requested that if we do local counts, we share them with PennDOT.
- ii. 2024 HPMS Reviews- 2024 HPMS Reviews- Brian updated the group that we completed 120 segments and uploaded them to the HPMS system. We will continue to complete these in 2025.

D. PennDOT Construction Projects Status 2024 (Mr. Dax Nulph, PennDOT D-1)- Dax presented a comprehensive PowerPoint covering complete and in-progress projects. The PowerPoint is on our website for review.

9. Transportation Funding Updates (PennDOT CPDM and other partners)

A. PennDOT- Brandon Leach PennDOT-

- i. The is now available on PennDOT's website. The publication is updated annually to summarize a variety of highway mileage and travel information for Pennsylvania. The data are from the Annual Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) submittal to FHWA and reflect the 2023 travel activity and highway conditions.
- ii. Highway Fund Flex to SEPTA
 - a. \$153M funds from the Interstate Management Program to SEPTA
 - b. One-time infusion to avoid immediate service cuts and delay significant fare increases.
 - c. 11.22.24 SEPTA Announcement | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (pa.gov)
- iii. Pennsylvania State Rail Plan Public Meeting
 - d. Advancing PA Rail Website- has an online survey to upload public input.
 - e. Zoom meeting link (December 10th – 4:00-5:30 PM)
 - f. Pennsylvania State Rail Plan Survey (metroquestsurvey.com) (Closes December 19th)

B. FHWA/FTA- No updates

10. Additional Discussion- Dan Gracenin introduced Doniele Russell, the new executive director of the MCPRC. Dan thanked the board and everyone involved with the MPO.

*Dan noted Brian Barnhizer has over 19 years of service with the program and noted Chris and Peter will heading up the MPO.

*Brian stated he appreciated all the effort and work everyone has done.

- *Commissioner Tim McGonigle thanked Dan and Brian for their hard work and planning.
- *Dale Perry emphasized the importance of bike and pedestrian projects in the Route 18 corridor, not just traffic projects.
- *Chris Conti informed the group of the 2025 meeting dates.
MPO Meetings are Tuesdays at 10:30-11:30:
 - March 11, 2025
 - June 10, 2025
 - September 9, 2025
 - December 9, 2025

11. Adjournment- Dan Gracenin and Brian Barnhizer, who are both retiring at the end of December 2024, were recognized for their service. Dan Gracenin introduced Doniele Russell, who will act as Executive Director starting officially in January 2025. A motion to adjourn was made at 11:48 AM by **Mr. Coxe, Chair**, and seconded by **Mr. Perry**. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Daniel M. Gracenin,
SVATS MPO Secretary**