

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Minutes of the Meeting
February 27, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.
Butler County Community College
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
Cisco Webex Meeting

The one hundred and sixtieth meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Leslie Osche.

Members: Brian Allen, ,Darin Alviano, Tony Amadio, Mike Belding, Brad Berlin, Kevin Boozel, Scott Bricker, Tom Ceraso, Douglas Chew, Amber Davis, Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Kim Geyer, Shelia Gombita, Mark Gordon, Kelly Gray, Robert Griffin, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Mark Hilliard, Charles Jones, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Sean Kertes, Bob Lesnick, Clifford Levine, Dave Lohr, Bob Macy, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Kevin McCullough, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Mavis Rainey, Robert Regola, Aurora Sharrard, Nick Sherman, Byron Stauffer, Jr., John Timney, Vince Vicites and Jason Zang.

Others: Greg Boris, Citizen; Kaitlyn Hendrickson, Allegheny Conference; Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development; Dusty Elias Kirk, Reed Smith LLP; and Brandon Leach, PennDOT; Jessi Mazzoni, Innovation Works Robotics Factory; and Dejana Raggi, Innovation Works Robotics Factory.

Staff: Kirk Brethauer, Leann Chaney, Ronda Craig, Dom D'Andrea, Linda Duffy, Margaret Fonner, Ryan Gordon, Chuck Imbrogno, Jenn Lasser, Shannon O'Connell, Josh Spano, Ailisa Sobien, Dave Totten, Cathy Tulley, Vincent Valdes, Sara Walfoort, and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Osche called to order the February 27, 2023 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.
 - a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded.
 - b. Any Conflict of Interest Declaration on Action Items - None

2. Action on Minutes of the December 12, 2022 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 12th meeting by Commissioner Rich Fitzgerald which was seconded by Commissioner Macey. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – Greg Boris (will present at the end of the meeting)
4. Presentation on the Gateway 228 Project in Butler County – Leslie Osche/Mark Gordon
 - 26.4-mile roadway running the entire width of Butler County.
 - Delineated into 13 segments impacting a dozen communities.
 - In the 1990s, Butler County's southern tier began experiencing an economic explosion.
 - In 1999, Cranberry Township began implementing stop-gap measures on Freedom Road, and District 10 began programming Route 228's segments on the TIP/STIP.
 - Adhering to a traditional funding approach would likely take 50 years.

Fate of the Corridor changed when the County Commissioners learned of the Federal BUILD program and, with assistance from Congressman Kelly, were given an opportunity at the Department of Transportation to discuss and seek advice on expediting reconstruction of Route 228.

In coordination with Delta, SPC and PennDOT District 10, Butler County developed a funding approach to use federal BUILD funds with state, county, and township participation to accelerate reconstruction of the remaining segments.

- Butler County took the lead in applying for BUILD funds.
 - 2018 award of \$20 million BUILD for Freedom Rd/Balls Bend (Route 228).
 - 2020 award of \$25 million BUILD for Freedom Rd/Three Degree Road (Route 228).
- PennDOT brought match on Route 228 segments.
 - PennDOT also assumed ROW acquisition costs on all segments.
 - PennDOT led construction of all segments.
- Cranberry Township led and assumed costs of Preliminary Engineering & Final Design for Freedom Road segments.
- Butler County, Cranberry Township, Adams Township, and Middlesex Township contributed financially to construction.
- Butler County assumed responsibility for utility relocations and construction cost overruns (if any) on Freedom Road segments.

Gateway 228 triggered other important transportation infrastructure investments to enhance the Route 228/Freedom Road corridor.

- MSA Thruway Investment – \$15 million with financial contributions from:
 - Cranberry Township
 - Butler County Infrastructure Bank
 - Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
 - Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)
 - Private Developer
 - UPMC

One segment remains – Mars Railroad Bridge West (On Route 228 from Franklin Road to the east and Pittsburgh Street to the west).

- 3.25-mile stretch.
- Depending on funding availability and approach, construction could be undertaken in sections.
 - Scenario 1 – Split construction into 2 projects.

Scenario 2 – Split construction into 3 projects. Scenario 1 Cost:

- Section 1 Cost - \$42,573,145
- Section 2 Cost - \$74,201,495

Total Cost Scenario 1- \$116,774,640

Scenario 2 Cost:

- Section 1 Cost - \$42,573,145
- Section 2 Cost - \$45,007,939
- Section 3 Cost - \$36,914,915

Total Cost Scenario 2 - \$124,495,999

5. Long Range Plan and Public Participation Update – Dom D’Andrea

LRP Development Schedule / Milestones

- Policy level review and update of LRP strategies (Fall 2022) Completed
- Work Group Meetings (October- February) Completed
- Meetings with Transit Operators (October-February) Completed
- PPP/Public Meetings (Fall 2022) 1st round of meetings completed
- TTC/TOC approval of LRTP project lists (March 2023)
- SPC Conducts the Environmental Justice Analysis (January-April)
- SPC Conducts AQ Conformity (March-April)
- SPC Assembles the LRP Document (March-April)
- 30-day Public Comment Period and Public Involvement (May-June 2023)

- LRP Adoption (June 26, 2023)

Focus Areas for Investment in the LRTP

- Bridges on the National Highway System (Reconstruction and Preservation)
- Roadways/Freight on the National Highway System (Reconstruction and Preservation)
- Safety on all networks (systematic improvements and specific project locations)
- Other Non-NHS Bridges
- Transit Operations and Facilities; PRT NEXTransit Plan
- Efficiency and Operations Projects
- Ped/Bike, Multi-Modal, Complete Streets, Air Quality
- Local/Municipal Bridge assistance
- Landslide remediation

LRTP Stages

- LRTP is broken down into three stages of timing
 - The further out a project is, the less detail is provided in terms of cost, phases, and scope.
6. Build Back Better Regional Grant Project Update – Jessi Mazzoni, Innovation Works Robotics Factory – Accelerate Program Manager/Dejana Raggi, Innovation Works Robotics Factory – Accelerate Program Coordinator

Overview – BBB

- EDA Grant –Build Back Better (BBB) - Coal Communities
- Applicant -Southwestern Pennsylvania New Economy Collaborative
- Focus on Equity, Rural Support, Innovation and Jobs
- Submitted 90M+ – awarded 60M+

Over 500 applicants – 21 awarded

- 5 individual projects under 1 grant

Individual Grants Under BBB

1. SME Robotics Adoption (Catalyst Connection)
2. Robotics Manufacturing Hub (ARM)
3. Expanded Pathways to New Economy Careers (SPC)
4. Applied Robotics Startup Factory (Innovation Works)
5. Expanded Pathways to Entrepreneurship (Innovate PGH)

Regional Job Creation, Training, Equity, Entrepreneurship, Business Support, Cluster Growth all significant areas of focus.

Expanded Pathways to New Economy Careers

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Expand training & placement opportunities

- Certificate, Apprenticeships, Advanced Degrees
 - Build a vibrant & robust robotics ecosystem
- Conduct outreach, build partnerships – goal of rooted businesses
 - Clear pathways and wrap-around services for students & workers
- Understand and remove barriers to employment
 - Be responsive to needs of regional businesses
- Establish training needs and talent strategies and deliver.
 - Establish Regional Training Hubs
- Serve business & workers – Train & Retain!

Project 3 – Expanded Pathways Partners

Project 3 – Roles/Responsibilities

- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (Project 3 Lead)
 - Subrecipient Monitoring & Early Coordination
 - Financial and Progress Reporting
- Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer (Starting March 2023)
 - Allegheny Conference on Community Development
 - Regional POC – Coordination of success of all five projects
- Higher Education
 - Expand industry-recognized programming, Robotics and Autonomy Related Degrees
 - Facilitate access and focused success for historically excluded populations
 - Establish educator professional development in robotics and autonomy
- Workforce Development/Investment Boards
 - Coordinate robotics and autonomy industry partnerships in their areas
 - Address the talent challenges of local firms
- Industry Intermediaries - Robotics apprenticeships
- Ecosystem Builders - PRN - Development of Career pathways, connectivity, best practices

Scope of Work – Partner Planning Meeting

- SPC Partner Kickoff Meeting
 - February 24th 2022 (9a-12p) – In Person
 - Allegheny Conference hosted the space (thank you again!)
 - Partners shared scope & plans for success
 - Discussed challenges and opportunities

- Discussed measurable gains and timelines
- Provided EDA feedback
- Next meeting being scheduled for April 2023

Early Success Stories

- PRN Discovery Days
- November 2022
- 100+ Organizations Attended (55 Robotics Companies & 45+ partners)
- 4,000+ Attendees
- 1,500 Students
- 300+ business connections made

7. Message from the Executive Director – Vincent Valdes
Next Meeting Date – **April 24, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.**

8. Other SPC Business

Presentation by Mr. Boris.

My name is Greg Boris. I am new to the area, having moved here from South Dakota where I served on our local group such as this for over 20 years. I was able to speak to you this fall about roadway safety. I come to you again on that subject. A lot of my work is driven by developing policy and programs based on data. I come to you today to touch on some regional data on traffic crashes and deaths and to suggest a potential approach to reducing those numbers.

The data that I'm drawing from is the most recent Pennsylvania Crash Facts and Statistics 2021. I'd like to highlight some items from the data in this report. First all counties in the MPO have crashes and fatalities. As you would expect, the more people in a county the higher the number of crashes and fatalities. Also, with the pandemic it seems that the number of vehicle miles traveled decreased in the region, though I've not been able to find data across recent years to support this. While the number of traffic fatalities have decreased from 2017-2021 the number of those who are pedestrians has stayed fairly constant. This suggests to me that the safety improvements in cars has improved driver and passenger survival rate. However, when a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle no amount of body armor will increase survivability. The major factor in a pedestrian surviving a crash is the speed that the driver is going.

Law enforcement fills out crash reports that are then reviewed by PennDOT. There are factors noted on the report that are controllable by government and those that are not in government's control. Let me give a couple of examples from the data collected. We can control the speed of the vehicle by setting speed limits and designing the roads so driving at high speeds is difficult if not impossible. We can sanction drivers who have been drinking. One-fourth of traffic fatalities in Pennsylvania are alcohol related. There are also situations that government can't control. We can't control the environment such as snow (when it happens), rain, light, dark, day of the week, or time of day. But we can control the environment where the crash occurs through street design, signaling, and more.

I think a deeper dive into the circumstances surrounding a crash is merited. When bad things happen with patients, there is an internal review where all the contributing factors are considered. There is certainly patient borne responsibility, but there are also health care system factors that help bring about a negative outcome. In our litigious society we try to assign blame to traffic crashes. We need to be seeking to learn, improve, and reduce traffic crashes and the associated fatalities through a deeper dive.

9. Adjourn – 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Fabian, Secretary-Treasurer