



**SEDA-COG METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEETING  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2019  
SEDA-COG  
LEWISBURG, PA  
9:30 A.M.**

**MPO VOTING MEMBERS**

Don Alexander, Northumberland County  
John DeVecchio, Union County  
Katie de Silva, Clinton County  
Bill Gomes, Mifflin County  
Brad Kerstetter, Juniata County  
Greg Molter, Montour County  
Carey Mullins, PennDOT Central Office  
Steve Phillips, SEDA-COG Board, Multi-Modal Interests  
Jonathan Ranck, PennDOT District 3-0  
Richard Ridgway, SEDA-COG Board At-Large Member  
Vickie Rusnak, PennDOT District 2-0  
Jim Saylor, SEDA-COG  
Eric Stahley, Columbia County

**OTHER MPO MEMBERS**

John Lavelle, Lycoming County Planning  
Matt Smoker, Federal Highway Administration

**GUESTS**

Robert McQuillan, LIFE Geisinger  
Beth Nidam, rabbittransit (via teleconference)  
Catherin Reuther, Peters Consultants  
Justin Skavery, Northumberland County  
Robert Watts, McCormick Taylor  
Kim Wheeler, Lewisburg Borough  
Steve Wilver, Larson Design Group

**STAFF PRESENT**

Kay Aikey, Program Assistant  
Steve Herman, Transportation Planner  
Jeff Stover, Transportation Program Chief

**Call to Order**

Mr. Saylor called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. Introduction of MPO members, guests and staff present.

## **Public Forum**

No comments were received from the general public.

Mr. Alexander announced his retirement from Northumberland County Planning and stated that the county will be appointing Mr. Justin Skavery as his replacement.

## **Approval of the July 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes of the SEDA-COG MPO**

*Mr. Molter made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2019, MPO meeting; Mr. Alexander seconded the motion.*

Ms. de Silva noted a correction to the minutes on page 2 under the TIP Administrative Modifications and Amendments. These are Road MaP funds matching the “\$5.00” fee not \$500 fee.

*Messrs. Molter and Alexander approved the minutes as amended; motion carried.*

## **TIP Administrative Modifications and Amendments**

*Mr. Mullins made a motion to approve the TIP administrative actions for PennDOT District 2-0; Ms. de Silva seconded the motion; motion carried.*

*Mr. Molter made a motion to approve the TIP administrative actions for PennDOT District 3-0; Mr. DelVecchio seconded the motion; motion carried.*

Mr. Saylor reviewed the following handouts provided in the meeting packet:

- Summary of Transportation Projects in the SEDA-COG Region Approved for TIP Addition Pending Available Funding/Actions by Other Parties.
- SEDA-COG MPO TIP Local Project Tracking.
- SEDA-COG MPO TIP Project Updates.
- Requests to Add Projects to the SEDA-COG MPO TIP.

Mr. Saylor stated that since the last MPO meeting, the Washington Township project in Northumberland County has been added. The township is looking for retroactive reimbursement funding.

The Snyder County project has been removed regarding Stumps Run in Middleburg as the project has recently been funded through the CFA flood mitigation project.

## **Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation Project Status**

Mr. Ranck provided the following update:

### **Northern Section**

River Bridge – all the piers have been constructed. Three spans of beams are remaining to be placed. Concrete pouring of the bridge deck has begun and will continue until the weather changes.

One non-river bridge is wrapping up construction work.

Paving – concrete paving started this summer. North-bound lanes in Northern end are being concreted and bituminous is being put down until winter.  
Still on target to have the Northern Section opened by 2022.

### Southern Section

Still working through the right-of-way and utility phases. The design is ongoing. Working on submitting and obtaining the permits needed. PennDOT met with local officials and emergency services about traffic impacts during construction which will be ongoing. Still on target for construction to start in 2022.

Will be phasing the construction of the southern section. The major part of it will be open first before the 61 connector and some of the interchanges and local areas.

More information is available at <http://www.csvt.com/>

Mr. Saylor briefly reviewed the letter from PennDOT District 3-0 to the Monroe Township Supervisors regarding the Proposed Traffic Signal for US 11/15 Northbound to US 11/US 522 Southbound in Snyder County. PennDOT needs the township agreement to own, operate, and maintain the traffic signal in order for it to be installed as part of the CSVT project.

### Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Update

The following handouts were included in the meeting packet:

- SEDA-COG MPO Staff Activity Report – September 2019.
  - o Mr. Saylor stated that staff provided Lewisburg Borough representatives with data and reports to support a traffic & safety study for Market Street in the Borough.
  - o Staff has also been working with the consultant, Michael Baker, on the Danville Area Traffic Study funded through the UPWP. Interviews for major stakeholders were held recently. Municipal roundtable discussions will be held on September 27, 2019. The session for Montour County officials is in the morning and Columbia and Northumberland County officials are invited for the afternoon.
  - o For the Fixed Route Transit Feasibility Study – an advisory group meeting was held on July 25 and the action step coming out of that meeting was that Mike Fisher of SEDA-COG will coordinate meetings with Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union County commissioners similar to the June meeting held with Columbia County commissioners before any type of feasibility study request will be submitted. Those meetings are still underway; some are scheduled, and some are still being scheduled.
  - o Highway Performance Monitoring System Sampling (HPMS) – Staff discussed the HPMS road sampling process, responsibilities, and training with PennDOT Bureau of Planning and Research. Staff attended HPMS Sampling Workshops from 9/4/19-9/5/19.

- Draft September 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for fiscal years 2020-2022 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022). Mr. Saylor stated this is the work plan that governs staff activities. Since the July MPO meeting, budget numbers have been added to the various tasks, a specific task has been added in for the HPMS data collection, and a task has been added to use consultant support for the LRTP update.

Mr. Saylor stated that staff has talked about potential projects for the statewide supplemental planning funds and a study for the Lewistown Amtrak station. These funds are often used for studies looking at transportation and land use coordination. Previously in the area they have been used to support the transportation components of comprehensive plan updates, corridor studies, bike/ped master plan, and the Valley Vision effort and master plan for the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership. The action item is to notify staff if any MPO member has anything that should be included in the UPWP. The final version of the UPWP will be brought to the November MPO meeting for adoption. The UPWP will be shared with Mr. Smoker and Mr. Mullins for their review/comments. Staff will then make their changes/comments before bringing to MPO members in November. Mr. Saylor stated that a consultant selection process will need to be put together for the consultant support for the LRTP.

Ms. de Silva asked if there is some type of training for new MPO members as well as other members regarding the regional transportation planning process. She mentioned that there will be some turnover on the MPO due to retirements and new members and thought it would be a good idea to have some type of training. There was feedback from other tenured members of an interest to have some type of orientation/refreshers on the transportation planning process. Mr. Herman suggested a joint session and will draft a member orientation poll to seek interest in a group session. PennDOT and FHWA will also be invited to help answer questions of MPO members.

Ms. de Silva stated that staff does a wonderful job with the agenda and the information that is given is useful to the MPO members. The basic understanding of all the programs and how everything works together is the missing piece.

Mr. Ridgway inquired about the multi-million-dollar project to redo East Street (Route 487) in Bloomsburg and asked how the project was determined as it is going to disrupt the town for 2-3 years and didn't understand how this project is considered a priority. Mr. Ranck stated that PennDOT has a robust asset management process to go through to determine what projects get done and when. Mr. Ridgway asked what would happen if the project doesn't get done. Mr. Ranck replied that the street has base deterioration, so just doing resurfacings wouldn't result in much useful life for the pavement.

Mr. Molter stated that when those types of projects are being done by the Districts, the projects do come before the MPO and are part of the draft TIP. Mr. Ridgway asked what happens if the MPO does not vote on a project. Mr. Mullins replied that a majority vote is needed by the MPO for advancement.

- SEDA-COG LTAP newsletter listing the Fall 2019 LTAP classes, county conventions, LTAP webinars and other LTAP services.
- SEDA-COG news release about Fall 2019 LTAP classes.
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Projects Status Update 2016 Funding Round and 2018 Funding Round. Ms. de Silva stated that the Clinton County Rail Trail project is still \$800,000 short, so the County applied to the Commonwealth Financing Authority

(CFA). Ms. de Silva also stated that the county's tourism promotion agency has dedicated \$20,000 annually for the Bald Eagle Valley Trail maintenance; this will be taken out of the hotel tax.

- SEDA-COG MPO Planning Calendar

### **SEDA-COG Long Range Transportation Plan Update**

A copy of the Long Range Transportation Plan Federal Guidelines prepared by Mike Sherman of FHWA was provided in the meeting packet. This presentation was prepared for Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Saylor highlighted some of the points in the presentation.

Mr. Saylor stated that a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a federally required element for MPOs as part of the transportation planning process.

Topics discussed in the presentation:

- Federal Metropolitan Planning Requirements for LRTPs
- The Planning Process
- The LRTP Financial Component
- Why is the Planning Process Important?

Mr. Saylor stated that MPO committee members will be used as the steering committee that guides the development of the Plan. Staff will reach out to some of the subcommittees for input on the sections that are relevant to them – bicycle/pedestrian and transit. Some community forums will be held when it comes to the project identification stage, similar to what was done for the 2016 LRTP. There will also be stakeholder interviews or interest specific forums, i.e., tourism, economic development, or other areas.

Mr. Saylor stated that one of the things that staff tried to do was to evaluate in the last update the same threshold of fiscal constraint for the whole 20-year period and maybe this should only be done for the first 5 years and look at something a little less constrained for years 6-20. The MPO has a fully constrained 12-year plan. For the out years, we would be pulling on the major projects, the big bridge rehabs, and the paving projects.

Mr. Mullins stated that for the financial guidance the federal funds will stay flat throughout the years of the Long Range Plan, and the state funding is at a 2% decrease every year.

Mr. Saylor stated there is a trial underway backed by the I-95 coalition to look at a mileage-based fee. At the state level, there have been some legislative proposals where there would be an annual fee for people that drive a hybrid or electric vehicle. There is one level for an all-electric and a lower level for a hybrid that seems to be calibrated to be about what an average driver would spend through the gas tax.

Mr. Ridgway stated that there is an argument regarding people getting a tax break when buying an electric car and it should be taken away because people are getting a tax break plus saving money on paying the fuel tax.

Mr. Gomes stated that every year when a person renews their registration you are to put your vehicle mileage on the form so there is a way to track the mileage.

Mr. Saylor stated that sustainability for the transportation network will need to be defined in the Long Range Plan.

Mr. Stahley added if you have less people driving, there is less wear and tear on the infrastructure. Mr. Alexander stated that when talking about the revenue stream and the fuel taxes, one of the most significant contributors is going to be phasing out baby boomers driving. Currently, 10,000 baby boomers per day are retiring and that trend has been going on for a long time. This will reflect negatively on fuel tax money coupled with the electric cars.

A copy of 450.324 Development and Content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan was included in the meeting packet.

### **Coordinated Transit Plan Adoption**

Mr. Herman reviewed the Public Comment Period Activities provided as a handout to MPO members.

Mr. Herman provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and shared the plan edits that have been made since the public comment period closed.

Mr. Stover joined the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

*Ms. de Silva made a motion for the MPO to adopt the 2019 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan; Mr. Alexander seconded the motion; motion carried.*

### **2021 Twelve Year Program Update**

Mr. Herman reviewed the following handouts provided in the meeting packet regarding upcoming milestones for developing the 2021 Twelve Year Transportation Program:

- 2021 TIP Update Timeline
- Draft List of Bridges to Include in the Local Prioritization for 2021-2024 TIP Update

More information is available at <http://www.talkpatransportation.com/>

Mr. Saylor stated that the preliminary scoring of the bridges will be discussed at the November 2019 MPO meeting.

### **Proposed SEDA-COG MPO 2020 Meeting Dates**

A copy of the proposed 2020 MPO meeting dates was provided in the meeting packet. Committee members were asked to review the dates and see if there are any conflicts. These dates will be finalized at the November MPO meeting.

### **Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee Update**

Mr. Saylor stated that the first subcommittee meeting was held on August 27. An invitation was extended to Mifflin and Juniata counties to join the group. A work group was created to continue working on the subcommittee principles and procedures. The group will continue to work on the

verbiage. Once the subcommittee has finalized the document, it will come back to the MPO for final approval.

The next meeting of this subcommittee will be held in late October/early November. Mr. Saylor asked that any county that has not responded to Ms. Lewis regarding nominating a member to the subcommittee to please do so.

### **Census Participant Statistical Areas Program**

Mr. Saylor stated that all information has been submitted. Staff is waiting on the Census replies to the submissions. Staff has been contacted by the Census Bureau about the formation of a complete count committee. The Census Bureau is not looking for an active role from the MPO for the complete count committee, but input was provided to them in terms of a mapping tool that shows the areas that had poor response rates in the last Census. Shamokin was one of those areas. The other issue raised was accurately counting the Amish population.

### **Member Forum**

The following handouts were provided in the meeting packet:

- Items of Potential Interest to MPO Members as of September 2019
- Meeting calendars for September, October, and November.

Mr. Mullins commented on the planning process review held on March 26, 2019. The following items were reviewed: Long Range Transportation Plan, TIP Development and Project Selection Process, Public Participation Plan, UPWP, UPWP Invoices, and the Civil Rights Information. The review team concluded that the SEDA-COG MPO Transportation Planning Process meets federal planning requirements. The review team found zero corrective actions. The report highlights five strengths and identifies thirteen recommendations worth consideration and/or follow up to further enhance the MPO planning process. Some of the strengths: SEDA-COG MPO staff is one of the most professional and knowledgeable staff within the Commonwealth; it demonstrates a commitment to accessibility with regards to the industry and to the public at large. The review team agencies are encouraged and impressed by the successful collaborations and positive relationships the staff demonstrates and maintains with their planning counterparts at FHWA, PennDOT, other MPOs, RPOs and their colleagues at county and municipal levels. The review team agencies believe that SEDA-COG MPO staff provide thorough and well thought out presentations at joint technical and coordinating committee meetings and demonstrates a willingness to work through complicated transportation planning issues with respect for the opinion of others. The review agencies applaud SEDA-COG MPO efforts in establishing a clear and transparent process regarding the solicitation, evaluation, and selection of projects for the region's long range transportation plan. The review agencies commend the SEDA-COG MPO coordinating committee members for their time, commitment, and dedication in carrying out their MPO planning responsibilities. The SEDA-COG MPO coordinating members truly understand their roles and come well prepared to meetings where they fully engage in open transparent decision-making.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Saylor adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m. The next regular meeting of the MPO is scheduled for November 22, 2019.