

Erie MPO Coordinating Committee
August 12, 2009 Minutes

A meeting of the Erie MPO Coordinating Committee was held on Wednesday, August 12, 2009 at 10:00 AM at the Erie Intermodal Transportation Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 208 East Bayfront Parkway, Erie, PA.

Those in attendance were:

Organization	Representative	Alternate
PennDOT Central		Michael Schultz (phone)
PennDOT D 1-0	Bill Petit	Don Hall
Erie County		Jake Welsh
City of Erie		
City of Erie		
City of Erie	Jon Tushak	Ed Kissell
City of Erie	Dick Gebhardt	
City of Erie	John Elliot	
City of Erie	Brenda Sandberg	
City of Corry	Gerry Dahl	
Fairview Township	Peter Kraus	
Harborcreek Township		
Lawrence Park Township		
Millcreek Township	Thomas Hoffman	
Millcreek Township	Rick Morris	
Summit Township	Marlin Coon	
Wesleyville Borough		
ECABO	Richard McGuire	
ECATO		
ECATO		
EWPPA		Julia Eagles
EMTA		Lorene McGuire
ERAA	Chris Rodgers	

Coordinating Committee Voting Members represented – 16 of 23; quorum present

Guests	Organization
Deborah Gabriel	PennDOT
Teresa Koon	Rep. John Evan's Office
Erin Wiley Moyers	PennDOT D-1
Mariah Hanson	PennDOT D-1
Regina Smith	Sen. Earl's Office
Robin Metz	PennDOT Program Center (Phone)
Charity Stover	Urban Engineers
Darrell Chapman	PennDOT Erie
Robert Swair	OVR

Bob Cronmiller	Erie RRS
Rhonda Smith	Rep. Hornaman's office
Ed Lesser	Erie Area COG
Bill Welch	Sierra Club
Lisa Austin	All Aboard Erie
Irene Rupp	Resident
Deborah Gallagher	Rep. Sonney's Office
John Morgan	ECDP

1. Call to Order / Introductions

Chairman Tom Hoffman called the meeting to order at 10:10am.

2. Hearing of the Public

Bill Welch of the Sierra Club addressed the Committee. Mr. Welch urged the Committee to be more proactive in pursuing high-speed rail (HSR) and improving public transportation in Erie County.

Bill Petit informed the Committee that PennDOT is currently updating the state rail plan and that the HSR priority in PA is the Keystone Corridor from Harrisburg to Philadelphia. Mr. Petit recommended that HSR advocacy groups in Erie County invite GE Transportation to play a leading role in pursuing HSR in the County, and that the MPO may help advance the cause by inviting PA Transportation Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver to attend a meeting in Erie to discuss the state rail plan and the prospects of HSR in Erie County.

Rick Morris moved the MPO draft a letter to Dep. Sec. Fauver inviting him to meet with County Officials and Residents for the purpose of discussing rail development in Erie County. Bill Petit seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Irene Rupp addressed the Committee. Ms. Rupp wished to register a complaint regarding the erosion of an embankment along Mill Creek near her property. Ms. Rupp called for more stringent storm water management. The Chair acknowledged her concerns, but informed her that the Committee has no jurisdiction over such issues.

Lisa Austin of All Aboard Erie (AAE) addressed the Committee. Ms. Austin wished to introduce her organization to the Committee. AAE is a newly formed advocacy group whose goal is to increase awareness and improve availability of public transportation and rail/HSR in Erie County. Ms. Austin invited the Committee to utilize the AAE for assistance with advocating for any relevant programs or projects.

3. Approval of May 13, 2009 Minutes

The Chairman asked for the membership to review the minutes.

Marlin Coon moved to approve the minutes. Rick Morris seconded the motion. The motion passed.

4. 2009 TIP Modifications

Michael Schultz, via conference call, provided an overview of the Fiscal Constraint Chart presented to the Committee that outlined changes to the 2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). There were four (4) administrative actions, and four (4) amendments.

The first amendment would add a \$150,000 Construction phase (CON) to the O'Neil Road RR Crossing project (MPMS 87332) in 2010 by shifting \$150,000 from the 2010 RR Line Item (MPMS 75522).

The second amendment would modify the 2009 Transit TIP by allocating \$1,933,179 of the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority's (EMTA) American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA/Economic Stimulus) funds to replace fixed route buses (MPMS 87041).

The third amendment would modify the 2009 Transit TIP by allocating \$130,000 of EMTA's Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funds to purchase paratransit buses for the LIFT (MPMS 87409).

The fourth amendment would modify the 2009 Transit TIP by allocating \$332,895 of the EMTA's New Freedom funds to purchase paratransit buses for the LIFT (MPMS 87410).

Ed Kissell asked whether the new buses were diesel or hybrid.

Lorene McGuire replied that the buses were clean diesel.

Mr. Kissell and Mr. Welch inquired whether new federal regulations required ARRA funds to be used for hybrid buses only.

Ms. McGuire and Mr. Petit informed the committee that no such regulations existed.

John Elliot moved to approve the four amendments. Marlin Coon seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5. Congestion Management Process (CMP)

Charity Stover presented a progress report on the CMP.

The CMP will determine which corridors and intersections should be identified as high priorities to reduce congestion. The process is based on updating Erie County's Travel Demand Model to analyze traffic patterns, vehicle miles traveled, and level of service along the highway network. Ms. Stover anticipates having the initial document finalized by September, but informed the committee that this would only be the initial step in what should be an annually updated process. This process will enable the Committee to identify priority projects and measure the effectiveness of completed projects.

Ms. Stover then took comments from the membership.

John Elliot added that currently there are no grade-separated railroad crossings from Liberty St. west to Peninsula Dr. The construction of one at Pittsburgh Ave. or Greengarden Ave. would make a crucial link within the urban area to ease congestion and improve the movement of goods.

Mr. Elliot also added that the development of a local intermodal freight facility would take a considerable amount of trucks off of the highway network that currently must travel to neighboring cities to process their freight.

Bill Petit added that rural corridors that link the urban area to the outlying population and industry centers need to be analyzed and improved.

Mr. Petit also informed the committee that the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Command Center, based at PennDOT D 1-0 Headquarters in Oil City, would be operational on a limited basis this winter.

Mr. Elliot also suggested that a local grant program for rail projects be developed to parallel the State Rail Capital Grant program.

6. STC Public Hearing & 2011 Twelve-Year Program Update

Jake Welsh presented the Committee with a draft document outlining the MPO projects/priorities to distribute to the State Transportation Commission (STC) at the upcoming public hearing.

Bill Petit commented that the presentations at the hearing should focus on the "Big Picture" and performance based measures for the entire transportation system, not on specific projects.

Mr. Welsh explained that actual presentation, which will be given by local leaders, would focus on the overall system and themes such as economic development, smart transportation, and intermodalism. The document presented today is a supplement to

the testimony and contains projects that will be alluded to by the presenters during their testimony

Robin Metz added that the STC hearings for Erie, Pittsburgh, and State College have been postponed and may be rescheduled for the end of September.

7. 2011 TIP & Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill Update

Robin Metz informed the Committee that there is still debate in Washington on whether Congress will authorize the next five year transportation bill this year, or if an eighteen month extension of the current act will be passed. Regardless, the 2011 TIP update is progressing as planned. Financial guidance will be submitted to the Districts and Planning Partners on August 18, 2009.

8. Other Business

Ed Kissell requested an update on the emergency traffic light preemption system.

Rick Morris and Marlin Coon informed the Committee that the project is not moving forward, and that the technology is no longer available.

Bill Petit added that he is unaware of any other location in Pennsylvania currently using a preemption system.

Ed Lesser informed the Committee that the Erie Area Council of Governments (COG) has assigned its public safety committee to look into the matter and will keep the MPO informed of any developments.

9. Next Meeting / Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2009

The next Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for November 11, 2009.