

**Northern Tier Regional Transportation Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
10 AM – 12 PM  
NTRPDC Conference Room  
Towanda, PA

**Attendees:** Brian Baker, NTRPDC  
Brett Voloshin, NTRPDC  
Kim Jennings, NTRPDC  
Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International  
Casey Bottiger, Michael Baker International  
Justin Batiuk, PennDOT District 3.0  
Chris King, PennDOT District 3.0  
Maggie Baker, PennDOT District 3.0  
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4.0  
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4.0  
Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office  
Christopher Chapman, DCED  
Rachel Hobbs, DCED  
Fred Jugan, Sullivan County  
Bob Getz, Sullivan County  
Brian Hoffman, Sullivan County  
Duane Naugle, Susquehanna County  
Jean Ruhf, Wyoming County  
Kaye Aumick, Tioga County  
Matt Williams, Bradford County  
Alexandra Allen, Representative Fritz  
John Petrini, BeST  
Leigh McCullen, BMTS

**I. Items For Discussion**

**Presentation –**

**LRTP Kickoff meeting with Brian Funkhouser and Casey Bottiger from Michael Baker.**

Brian Funkhouser introduces himself to the committee and notes his experience as well as his history of working in the Northern Tier region on previous LRTPs. He also introduces Casey Bottiger to the committee as well. Brian Funkhouser highlights some of the key focuses of this LRTP update like a regional profile of preexisting conditions, engage with stakeholders and the public, revenue forecast that the region expects to see over the course of the plan period, project prioritization, Environmental Justice for minority populations, impact on environmental resources, and performance measures for the region to meet. Brian Funkhouser further explains that his team at Michael Baker International plans to utilize land use, transportation, socioeconomic, and environmental data from multiple sources like PennDOT. Brian Funkhouser shares the LRTP update schedule with the committee and comments that he hopes to have the plan ready for adoption by this time next year. Brian Funkhouser wants to develop a strong outreach program for this update by hosting public listening sessions or conducting interviews with specific stakeholders within the region. He asks the committee to assist in listing specific individuals or companies that need to be included in this process. Brian Baker explains that the RPO staff did have a preliminary meeting with Brian Funkhouser to get an initial idea of stakeholders in the region, but he wanted to bring the list before the committee for any additional stakeholders that may have been missed. Brian Hoffman asks if there is interest in contacting privately owned airports within the region. Brian Funkhouser says that

they have had interest in the past, but the Bradford County Airport and the Grand Canyon Regional Airport are the two that they plan to focus on. Both Brian Baker and Brian Hoffman comment that the private airports in the region may not want to be a part of the process as to not publicize their private airport. Brian Baker asks Kaye Aumick if the Rail and Freight business in Wellsboro is still operating. Kye Aumick responds that she doesn't believe trains run into town anymore, but they still use the junction nearby. Brian Funkhouser asks if Kaye Aumick know of a contact he can reach out to. Kaye Aumick does not know off the top of her head, but offers to look into it. Brian Baker asks Jean Ruhf if there is any rail and freight activity occurring in Wyoming County, but received no response. Brian Baker continues on to asks Matt Williams in regard of activity in Bradford County. Matt Williams comments that he has heard rumors that there are attempts to reconstruct the Monroeton Shippers Lifeline, but he believes the biggest issue along that corridor is the significant damages done during the 2011 flood event. Matt Williams has also heard rumors that the corridor would instead be used for Rails to Trails.

Moving on to public transportation stakeholders, Brian Baker asks Brian Hoffman or Bob Getz for more information regarding the changes occurring with BeST. Brian Hoffman explains that Bradford, Sullivan, and Tioga's public transportation authority are moving towards being self-managed and will no longer be associated with River Valley Transit, which after a recent change, is now the River Valley Transit Authority. Brian Hoffman expects BeST to hire an executive director sometime in early 2024. Brian Hoffman wonders aloud if the LRTP update would bring to light the amount of vehicle assets and personnel assets of each transit authority listed, and potential efficiencies that would result from having a single unified transit authority for the five-county region. Brian Baker continues down the list of the different sectors for potential stakeholders, allowing anyone to chime in with ideas. Brian Baker asks Justin Batiuk for the environmental manager contact at District 3.0, and Justin Batiuk offers to share Lucas Franzene's contact info to Brian Baker. Matt Williams comments that it is important to reach out to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as an environmental stakeholder due to their involvement with local bridges in Bradford County.

Brian Baker asks Jean Ruhf if she is still the main point of contact for the Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau, and Jean Ruhf agrees. Brian Baker asks Duane Naugle for the point of contact for the Susquehanna County Promotion & Tourism Agency. Duane Naugle explains that the point of contact for that agency is Stacy Wilson. Brian Baker asks Matt Williams for the main contact for Bradford County Tourism Promotion Agency. Matt Williams offers to share Robin Cummings contact info with Brian Baker after the meeting, and Matt Williams believe the County Chambers should also be involved in this process as well. Bob Getz asks if the Endless Mountains Heritage Region should be involved as well, and Matt Williams seconds that opinion. Brian Baker asks Brian Hoffman if Sullivan County has any economic development that should be included, and Brian Hoffman explains that the county planning office also participates in economic development. Brian Baker asks Kaye Aumick if there is anyone else besides TCDC that should be listed. Kaye Aumick responds that Develop Tioga should be included and the point of contact would be Kristin Hamilton. Bob Getz asks if the Farm Bureau or any agriculture agencies involved in this process. Brian Hoffman agrees that the joint Farm Bureau between Bradford and Sullivan Counties should be included on the list of stakeholders. Matt Williams agrees with the notion as well. Bob Getz offers the idea to reach out to natural gas shipping companies since they transport natural gas by tractor and trailer or tankers. Steve Fisher wonders if it is worthwhile to reach out to the natural gas coalition as a result, and Brian Hoffman believes Mike Narcavage would be a good point of contact. Brian Baker asks about who to contact about housing, Treehab was offered up by the committee, and Duane Naugle wonders if Susquehanna Interfaith, or other public service organizations should be contacted as well. Brian Hoffman asks if apartment buildings or senior apartment complexes should be included as well in this conversation. Brian Funkhouser thanks the committee for their assistance and looks forward to future RTAC meetings as the LRTP update develops.

Steve Fisher comments that Christopher Chapman from DCED (and DCED as a whole) wants to be more involved with comprehensive transportation plans. Christopher Chapman takes a moment to introduce himself as well as Rachel Hobbs. Jean Ruhf comments that she thought to include PA Route 6 for the Tourism section of the list.

A. October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting minutes

Brian Baker asks the committee if anyone had any questions or revisions for the October meeting minutes. No questions or revisions were discussed at this time. Fred Jugan makes the motion to accept the meeting minutes, Brian Hoffman seconds the motion, and the motion passes unanimously.

B. 2023 – 2026 TIP Administrative Actions & Amendments

Justin Batiuk explains that the majority of the actions presented were from a rework of FFY 2024. Many construction phases received major increases and consultant design costs have almost doubled. Many of these changes will be reflected in the draft 2025 TIP, which District 3.0 is beginning work on. Justin Batiuk offers to answer any questions at this time.

Steve Fisher explains that District 4.0 is in a similar situation as costs increase across all sectors, and airs his concerns as some projects seem to be growing exponentially. There are two actions presented to the committee which are two right-of-ways being added to the TIP. Steve Fisher offers to answer any questions at this time.

C. Safety Performance Measures Approval

Brian Baker presents the statewide and regional targets for performance measures to the committee. Brian Baker reminds the committee that the RPO does not develop these targets, but received them from PennDOT Central Office. Brian Baker asks the committee to accept the statewide and regional targets as presented. Bob Getz asks for clarification on which set of targets are statewide and which are regional. Bob Getz makes the motion, Matt Williams seconds the motion, and the motion passes unanimously.

D. 2025 – 2028 TIP update

Brian Baker explains that the RPO will be participating in meetings with both PennDOT District 3.0 and 4.0 to begin developing the 2025 Draft TIP. Brian Baker comments that he has shared letters with both districts to include new projects on the TIP and he is curious to see how these projects will be included due to the increasing costs. Brian Baker reminds the committee that the RPO plans to schedule meetings with county officials with each county in the region to discuss the draft TIP. Dean Roberts comments that this process is generally how the TIP season kicks off, and reminds the committee of the importance of the document and these meetings. Brian Baker expects most of the projects on the TIP to be carried over from the previous document, but he knows that the districts and the RPO will work diligently to include new projects on the TIP where applicable. Brian Baker opens the conversation for any questions at this time.

E. UPWP update

Brian Baker explains that the RPO has submitted their draft of the UPWP to their federal partners. The RPO did receive comments from Vanessa Shamberg from Federal Highway Administration and plan to address these comments. Brian Baker comments that there will be an RTAC meeting in January for the committee to approve the UPWP before the deadline. Brian Baker reminds the committee the purpose of completing an interim UPWP for this year is to hopefully offset the UPWP and the TIP so the update periods do not overlap.

#### F. TA-Set Aside Results

Brian Baker thanks the committee for submitting their rankings for the TA Set Aside projects. After calculating the results, the Clinton/Factoryville project ranked higher than the Westfield project, and those rankings were submitted to PennDOT Central Office. Brian Baker reminds the committee that these rankings does not guarantee that these projects will receive funding, but he remains hopeful that they do receive funding. Dean Roberts comments to write himself a reminder to double check when to expect the results for the TA Set Aside funding.

#### G. PPP-Title VI-LEP Plan Updates

Brian Baker thanks Dean Roberts in the process to hire Michael Baker International to develop updates for the Northern Tier Public Participation Plan, Title VI, and Limited English Proficiency plans. Brian Baker shares that the RPO plans to hold a kick off meeting with Brian Funkhouser and Casey Bottiger after the RTAC meeting. Brian Funkhouser comments that there have been quite a few changes since the last time these plans were updated, so now is a good time to tackle this project.

#### H. 2024 RTAC Meeting Dates

Brian Baker explains that there will be an additional RTAC meeting held in January of 2024, but the following meetings should follow the original schedule. Brian Baker comments that he meticulously planned the meeting dates to avoid any holidays, but he asks the committee to double check his work.

#### I. Supplemental Funding Update: Marsh Creek, Tunkhannock Mobility

No major updates were provided for the Marsh Creek Greenway or for the Tunkhannock Mobility project.

#### J. LTAP

Brian Baker explains that the RPO is in the early stages of planning LTAP classes for the spring season. Brett Voloshin comments that he will be sending out a survey to assess regional interest in LTAP classes to be scheduled for the next year.

#### K. GIS report

Brett Voloshin explains that he is continuing his efforts on the Endless Mountains Gravel Bikepacking loop, developing maps as necessary for grant writing assistance, and advertises general GIS mapping assistance for the committee.

## II. County & Agency Reports

#### A. Legislative Report

No major updates were provided at this time.

#### B. FHWA Report

Brian Baker explains that Vanessa Shamberg was unable to attend today's meeting, but shared some important information regarding grants available. Brian Baker offers to share the email with the information to the committee for ease of access.

## C. PennDOT Reports

### 1. Central Office

Dean Roberts comments that he attended a networking meeting in Washington D.C. and he asked federal partners if the next federal bill would introduce new grant programs. The federal partners responded by saying they were unsure, but they expect it is a likely scenario. Dean Roberts wishes the committee a safe and happy holiday season.

### 2. District 3.0

Justin Batiuk comments that District 3.0 will continue to work on the Draft TIP and he wishes everyone a happy holiday season.

### 3. District 4.0

Steve Fisher does not have any additional updates to share, but he asks if an Equipment show will be held in District 4.0 this year. Brian Baker explains that he needs to find new members for the committee, but he hopes to have an Equipment show this year.

## D. County Reports

Bradford – No updates were provided at this time.

Sullivan – Fred Jugan updates Justin Batiuk regarding the progress on the Litcrick bridge repair project. He suggested the township contact Larson Design Group to design a bridge for summer of 2024 so it can go to bid in the fall of 2024. Justin Batiuk asks if Fred Jugan contacted Aaron Crist, and Fred Jugan comments that he is not a supervisor anymore so he leaves it up to the municipal secretary.

Bob Getz asks how the representatives for the RTAC committee are updated. Brian Baker explains that there are three members from each county for fifteen voting members as well as one voting member from District 3.0, 4.0, and from Central Office for a total of 18 voting members. The three members from each county are appointed by the county commissioners each year. Bob Getz explains the reason he asks this question is because he has noticed a lack of attendance or participation from certain members of the committee, and they should be reminded the importance of this committee and the impact it has on the region as a whole. Brian Hoffman comments that the process for appointing committee members is different per county, and he is thankful for Fred Jugan and Bob Getz for continuing to participate in these committees even though they are not supervisors or commissioners. Brian Hoffman and Bob Getz discusses the issue of the road conditions near Red Rock Hills. Bob Getz believes that it is a safety concern where a driver may pop a tire if they are not careful. Brian Hoffman comments to the committee that the five-county region will have six new commissioners out of the fifteen elected.

Susquehanna – Duane Naugle comments that he has heard many mixed signals from the community regarding the construction project on I-81. Many are happy that work is being conducted on I-81, but the residents of New Milford Borough are worried about the increase of traffic as a result of this project. Duane Naugle has been in contact with the consultant working with PennDOT on this project to reconstruct the Gibson exit.

Tioga – No major updates were provided at this time.

Wyoming – No major updates were provided at this time.

## E. BeST Report

No additional updates were provided at this time.

F. BMTS Report

Brian Baker reminds the committee that BMTS no longer has any interaction with the region and therefore will not participate on this committee.

G. NTRPDC Report

Kim Jennings introduces herself to the committee as the community grant-writing assistant at Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission. Kim Jennings comments that Northern Tier has assisted in submitting eight LSA grants, and she is looking forward to the next round for applications in the fall. Coming up in the near future is the DCNR's C2P2 program opens in January for recreation or park-based projects, and DCED's Multimodal program opens in March for projects focusing on bridges, sidewalks, or some road construction. Kim Jennings offers to share her contact information with the committee for any grant writing assistance.

**III. Other Items For Discussion**

No other items were discussed at this time.

**IV. Public Discussion**

No public discussions were held at this time.

**V. Adjournment & Next Scheduled Meeting**

Fred Jugan makes the motion to adjourn the meeting, Duane Naugle seconds the motion, and the motion passes unanimously. The next RTAC meeting will be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.