

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

Date: Monday, October 16th, 2023
10 AM – 12 PM
NTRPDC Conference Room
Towanda, PA

Attendees: Brian Baker, NTRPDC
Brett Voloshin, NTRPDC
Frank Thompson, NTRPDC
Dean Roberts, PennDOT Central Office
Justin Batiuk, PennDOT District 3.0
Marie Bishop, PennDOT District 4.0
Steve Fisher, PennDOT District 4.0
Emma Pugh, PennDOT District 4.0
John Petrini, PennDOT District 4.0
Matt Williams, Bradford County
Alan Hall, Susquehanna County
Al Quimby, Tioga County
Jen Cochran, Tioga County
Bob Getz, Sullivan County
Fred Jugan, Sullivan County
Alexandra Allen, Representative Fritz
Chuck Dillon, Senator Yaw
Julie Williams, Representative Pickett

I. Items for Discussion

A. Approve August 14th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Brian Baker thanks everyone present for attending this meeting, however, there are not enough voting members present for a quorum. Brian Baker asks Steve Fisher regarding an action that needed voting on. Steve Fisher explains that the purpose of this vote is to officially place the Johnston Street bridge on the TIP, as the last vote was to change the priority from Church Street to Johnston Street. Brian Baker comments that he will set up an E-ballot for this issue after the meeting. Brian Baker asks the committee if anyone attending had any questions or comments about errors in the August meeting minutes. No comments or questions were offered at this time.

B. 2023 – 2026 TIP Administrative Actions & Amendments

District 3.0 Administrative Actions & Amendments

Justin Batiuk highlights that PennDOT Central Office allocated funds to District 3.0 for the Northern Tier Pedestrian Countdown Signal project on the first page of the document. Justin Batiuk continues by highlighting the allocation of CRP funds to the Marsh Creek Greenway project that was discussed during the last RTAC meeting. On page 3 of the document details the allocation of 200,000\$ in two different years, so 400,000\$ total, for ideally slide projects as a way to show funding is available for permits if necessary to complete follow-up repairs. Justin Batiuk highlights a 560,000\$ increase for a project on Route 6 over Marsh Creek due to the rising costs of bids for these projects. Continuing down the page, District 3.0 received additional funds titled “August Redistribution” for the allocation of cleaning up line items or accommodating for increasing bids for projects within District 3.0, and therefore in the Northern Tier region. District 3.0 received around 4 million for the northern tier region. The final three pages are for cleaning up cash flows

to utilize every dollar available for Northern Tier. Justin Batiuk comments that there are no votes required for these actions or amendments, but he is available to take any questions at this time. Chuck Dillon asked a question about the purpose of the 560,000\$ mentioned earlier during the highlights. Justin Batiuk responded that the purpose is to cover the low bid for the project since the project was let recently. Chuck Dillon asked if the project will begin this year or wait until next year. Justin Batiuk responded that at this time of the year, projects let will typically wait until next year to start, but Justin Batiuk offered to reach out for a direct answer. Fred Jugan asks if District 3.0 placed a bridge within Terry Township on the TIP. Justin asks which bridge Fred Jugan is referring to and if he knows the township road number. Fred Jugan does not remember the road number, but the bridge runs over Lake Crick. Fred Jugan continues to say that the secretary should have sent District 3.0 all the paperwork necessary to place the bridge on the TIP. Justin Batiuk offers to check the system and he will ask his coworkers, Lloyd Ayres and Aaron Crist, regarding the bridge. Al Quimby asks if Justin Batiuk knows when the welcome center on route 15 will be reopened. Justin Batiuk does not know off hand, but offers to reach out and find an answer for Al Quimby.

District 4.0 Administrative Actions & Amendments

Steve Fisher describes that most of the actions listed on the document are to move around some cash flows and utilize every dollar allocated to Northern Tier. Steve Fisher highlights an action for SR1022 for the PE final design, and a similar situation for SR 11 over Tanary Street. District 4.0 is also receiving high bids and costs are increasing, so there are actions increasing funding within the document in response to these rising costs. Steve Fisher highlights an action for SR 29 over Lake Carey as well as the August Redistributions amendments that District 4.0 is conducting for the Northern Tier region. District 4.0 received around 6.6 million spread across multiple funding sources. Steve Fisher explains the importance and impact the August Redistribution has on the TIP updates and the District as a whole. Brian Baker asks if anyone in attendance has questions for Steve Fisher. Bob Getz asks how much did it cost to fix the damage done during the recent flood in South Abington. Steve Fisher comments that the District is still calculating the final numbers, but initial discussions estimated that District 4.0 alone would spend around 15 million in damages, the City of Scranton would spend around 10 million, and together they almost reached the threshold to declare an emergency. Bob Getz asks if the stream in question was protected in the past, and Steve Fisher comments that it is common for flooding in Clarks Summit through the notch, but he has never seen it flood like it did ever in his life. Steve Fisher comments that the District is still working to figure out the best way to pay for the repairs, and he hopes that the District can use IJA funding due to a section in the Act detailing a funding source for repair and reinforcement of structures that are susceptible to flooding. Bob Getz comments on the scale of debris he saw being moved during the event, and Steve Fisher agrees that it is a concern throughout the District. Steve Fisher continues to say that if this event happened within the Northern Tier region that 10 million would essentially be the entire program for the region and these events are happening more frequently. Fred Jugan agrees that if the right rainstorm hits an area the structures fail.

Brian Baker asks Steve Fisher to discuss in further detail the vote mentioned earlier in the meeting. Steve Fisher reminds the committee about a previous vote where the committee voted to change the priority from the Church Street bridge to the Johnston Street bridge due to the rapid deterioration of the Johnston Street bridge. This vote is to approve the amendment to allocate funding to the Johnston Street bridge. Brian Baker asks Steve Fisher to email a copy of the amendment and a short description for the creation of an E-ballot to be sent out this week.

C. CEDS Update

Frank Thompson explains the importance of having a CEDS plan to the committee. Northern Tier has developed a survey for their CEDS update that is hosted on the company's website. Frank Thompson asks the committee to fill out the survey and to share it with anyone who would be interested in filling it out. Brian Baker opens the discussion for any questions at this time.

D. Carbon Reduction Funding – District 4.0

Brian Baker reminds the committee of the discussions held about the Carbon Reduction Funding at the last RTAC meeting, and explains how he helped the head of the Rails to Trails council get in contact with a representative at District 4.0. Both Brian Baker and Steve Fisher have not heard any further updates regarding the utilization of CRF funding within the District 4.0 section of the Northern Tier Region. Brian Baker and Alan Hall remind the committee that if the CRF funds are not used this federal fiscal year then they can be rolled back once a project is selected.

E. LRTP Update

Brian Baker thanks PennDOT Central Office for their assistance with hiring a consultant for updating the LRTP plan. The Northern Tier RPO will be working with Brian Funkhouser at Michael Baker International, which the RPO has worked with Brian Funkhouser before at a different consultant company. Brian Baker and Brett Voloshin had the opportunity to meet with Brian Funkhouser at the 2023 Planning Partners Meeting. Brian Baker further explains that he is working with PennDOT Central Office to hire Michael Baker International to assist with updating the RPO's Public Participation, Title VI, and Limited English Proficiency plans. Brian Baker comments that this will be a pleasant change of pace from the last LRTP update. A kick off meeting for this update is currently being scheduled at this time. Brian Baker asks Dean Roberts for any comments at this time. Dean Roberts explains that the RPO may need work with Central Office to issue another work order for working with Michael Baker International on the Public Participation, Title VI, and Limited English Proficiency plans.

F. UPWP Update

Brian Baker explains that the RPO recently received the guidance for updating the UPWP plan, and that this update will only cover one federal fiscal year due to interest from PennDOT and FHWA to have the UPWP update cycle and TIP update cycle alternate instead of coinciding. Brian Baker expects this update to be a simple process, and he asks the committee for any information or tasks that they would like to be highlighted within this update. He further explains the update needs to be adopted by January 31st, 2024, and that the updated plan will need to undergo a thirty-day comment period. Brian Baker asks Dean Roberts for any comments on the UPWP update. Dean Roberts comments that PennDOT would have preferred to extend the current UPWP, but federal regulations require UPWP plans to extend only one or two years per update. Brian Baker comments that he may need to schedule a meeting with the committee in January to adopt the new UPWP plan.

G. TA – Set Aside

Brian Baker comments that only two projects were submitted in the region: one in Clinton and Factoryville, and one Westfield borough. Brian Baker explains that the committee will need to rank the two projects and submit their rankings to Central Office before December 1st, 2023. Steve Fisher asked about a third project within the region that showed interest in the funding source. Brian Baker remembers having initial meetings with representatives from that project, but they must not have submitted a final application. Frank Thompson asked if one of the applicants received any grant writing assistance from Northern Tier. Brian Baker explains that Kim Jennings

assisted with the Clinton and Factoryville application. Brian Baker hopes to schedule a meeting for sometime within mid-November, before the hunting and holiday season. Brian Baker asks the committee if anyone would be against scheduling a meeting for mid-November to watch the applicants present their projects and emailing in their rankings of the two projects. Bob Getz asks to confirm that there are only two projects this year, and Brian Baker confirms that statement. Alan Hall asks to schedule a time now during the meeting and offers November 14th as a potential date. After hearing no objections, Brian Baker explains that the meeting will be held over Microsoft Teams from 10 AM to 11 AM on November 14th.

H. Annual Meeting

Brian Baker reminds the committee that an invite to the NTRPDC Annual Meeting was shared in a previous meeting, but the meeting will be held at the Troy Sale Barn on Friday October, 20th at 10 AM. Fred Jugan asks again for the name of the location and multiple members respond with the name and how to get there.

I. Supplemental Funding Update: Marsh Creek, Tunkhannock Mobility

Jen Cochran explains that the Marsh Creek Greenway project did receive the CRF funding as well as a 500,000\$ grant from DCNR which will be used for the northern section of the greenway as that section of the project reaches the stages for final design.

No one present from Tunkhannock Mobility was present at the meeting to provide an update.

J. LTAP

Brian Baker explains that Brett Voloshin had attended an annual planning partners meeting for LTAP and gave a short report of Northern Tier's efforts to promote LTAP within the region.

K. GIS Report

Brian Baker and Brett Voloshin explains that there are no new updates regarding the use of GIS aside from providing maps for grant writing assistance and for the Endless Mountains Bike-packing Loop project. Brett Voloshin offers GIS mapping assistance to the committee. Steve Fisher asks Brett Voloshin if he still needs information on the Route 6 repaving projects in Wyoming County. Brett Voloshin agrees that he does still need the information, and Brian Baker explains that NTRPDC is looking to highlight transportation projects within the region at the Annual Meeting.

II. County & Agency Reports

A. Legislative Reports

Alexandra Allen and Julie Williams report no new updates to be shared at this time.

Chuck Dillon wishes that a budget will be passed before the end of the year.

B. FHWA Reports

No one present to provide an update at this time.

C. PennDOT Reports

1. Central Office

Dean Roberts asks the RPO to provide any feedback on the 2023 Planning Partners Meeting. Brian Baker explains the event to the committee, the RPO involvement in planning the event, and comments that he enjoyed the larger size of the venue as it allowed for more elbow room in the meeting space.

2. District 3.0

Justin Batiuk reports that the District is shifting its focus towards the next TIP update, and offers to take any questions at this time. Fred Jugan reminds Justin Batiuk to reach out to Terry Township regarding the addition of the Lake crick bridge to the TIP. Justin Batiuk explains that he just received a response from Lloyd Ayres that the district did receive the paperwork and the bridge will be on the next TIP update. Al Quimby asks for an update on the Bellefonte Exchange project. Dean Roberts comments that the project should have been let by now, but unfortunately the project has been pushed out until April of next year due to a sizable cost increase. Bob Getz asks for the cost of the new exit built at the exchange to Howard. Dean Roberts offers to look into it, and Bob Getz comments that the exit only serves a small area. Dean Roberts explains that the project for that exit was combined with another project and the exit serves as an access point for local traffic. Dean Roberts estimates around 40 million for the project as a whole, but offers to share the exact numbers with the committee.

3. District 4.0

Steve Fisher does not have any updates at this time and offers to take any questions from the committee.

D. County Reports

Bradford County

Matt Williams reports that he recently met with District 3.0 and their consultant on county bridge 38 in order to resolve a right of way issue with a landowner.

Sullivan County

Bob Getz commends PennDOT for their work on maintaining Route 220 and 87. Bob Getz asks Steve Fisher regarding the poor conditions of Route 118 in Luzerne County. Fred Jugan comments that the quality of the road deteriorates after the Sullivan County line. Steve Fisher offers to investigate into the issue and report back with his findings.

Susquehanna County

Alan Hall comments that they are focusing on their budget update, and that progress for the Route 81 project is coming along. Route 29 is completed and Alan Hall shares his concerns for the Gibson exit. Steve Fisher offers to collect a milestone schedule for Alan Hall regarding the Gibson exit. Alan Hall hopes to continue to focus on advocating for listing local bridges on the TIP for the next update. Steve Fisher ponders the feasibility of bundling local bridge projects together due to the sheer need for repairs in Susquehanna and Wyoming counties. Dean Roberts comments that there has been a focus to push the funding towards structures with the most traffic, which has become a statewide issue for local bridges.

Brian Baker asks Steve Fisher if the District has an inspector that will review repairs done to a road after a utility company installs new pipelines under the road and repaves it. Brian Baker comments on the terrible conditions of Lake Ave in Montrose after a utility company installed new water mains and repaved the road. Steve Fisher explains that they do have an inspector that will review repairs if the entire road is repaved, but he is unsure if the inspector needs to be there for small patchwork done to the roads. Steve Fisher offers to reach out and look into it further.

Tioga County

Jen Cochrun provides an update on the south section of the Rail Trail. There are three bridges under construction in the south section: one bridge is currently finished and paved, another bridge had a new abutment built, and another bridge is ready for the deck to be built. The hopeful completion date for all three bridges is by November, and the project as a whole by the end of the year.

Wyoming County

No updates were provided at this time.

E. BeST Report

Bob Getz reports that BeST is looking into splitting from River Valley Transit and moving their call center back into the region. BeST has hired a new financial advisor and placed an ad in the local newspapers for a new Executive Director. BeST aims to be completely independent from River Valley in the future.

F. BMTS Report

No one present to provide an update at this time.

G. NTRPDC Report

Frank Thompson reminds the committee about the Northern Tier's grant writing assistance program. Kim Jennings works in the program to aid municipalities and local businesses, and Frank Thompson offers the service to the committee. Alan Hall comments that New Milford Borough needs funding to repair their pool, and Frank Thompson asks for contact information so they can work on it.

III. Other Items for Discussion

No other items were discussed at this time.

IV. Public Discussion

No other discussions were held at this time.

V. Adjournment & Next Scheduled Meeting

Brian Baker claims this meeting now adjourned since the committee cannot make a motion, and the next meeting will be held on December 11th.