

Meeting Minutes
Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee
Friday, January 27, 2023

The Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee was called to order by Chairman Matt Price at 9:00 A.M. The meeting was in the Annex I Building's Conference Room, at 205 Penn Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

Attending:

Chris Stevens, James Lettiere, Mark W. Lazzari (The EADS Group), Barbara Hauge (Thomas R. Harley UpStreet Architects), John Turack (Penn State Extension), Neal Fogle (Penn State Extension), Lucas Parkes (The EADS Group), Matt Price, George Conrad, Brian Wisner, Vince Greenland, Debra Clark-Loner, Laura White, Judy Scott, Zach Lee, Jen Bellis and Jayme Reck.

Not in attendance:

Charles Harper, Wendy Melius and Stacy Kauffman.

Minutes

Matt Price called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. The first item up for review and action were the meeting minutes from January 6, 2023. Matt asked for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. George made the motion and Laura seconded it. All were in favor.

The next item up for discussion was the County Commissioners approval January 10, 2023 to engage the EADS Group to prepare the County's Active Transportation Plan (pending a contract/agreement between the Commissioners and the EADS Group.) Jim and Mark Lazzari (EADS Group) have been working together and have finalized the contract and hope to have it signed by the EADS Group this afternoon (1/27/23). It will then be taken to the County Commissioners next Tuesday (1/31/23) for approval of an executed agreement.

Matt turned the meeting over to Mark Lazzari and team (EADS Group) to introduce themselves and to go over their expectations, project approach, major tasks, schedule and their expectations/input from the ATC. He started off by reviewing their kick-off meeting handout. Mark explained the agreement is with the EADS Group and their team (which includes Barbara Hauge, Lucas Parkes, John Turack and Neal Fogle.) He said the ATC is unique because it has already been active and working on this project and the EADS Group needs "brought up to speed." They want to match themselves to the ATC's expectations. Their expectations of the ATC are as follows: participate in monthly meetings, provide input and promote the Active Transportation Plan, provide local knowledge and help to identify priorities, review draft and final plan, promote the plan within the County and support implementation efforts. Mark mentioned that Sam Pearson (Walk Works) may want to review the plan as well considering that she has experience working on these types of plans. Matt and Jim both mentioned that they have been meeting with Ms. Pearson every two weeks since receiving the award (approx... 5-6 times.) These meetings go well and Ms. Pearson is just checking to make sure the ATC is progressing. Jim offered the EADS Group and opportunity to be involved in these calls if they choose to do so.

Mark proceeded to go over the project approach, major tasks and the schedule. He said the plan will be delivered for adoption by September 30, 2023, which is the end of the grant period. The ATC will need to inform the EADS Group of when the Commissioners meet so it is ready for adoption by the deadline. They will engage different segments of the County and obtain input from local and regional sources throughout the process. This will happen by Committee Meetings (monthly), Public Workshop Sessions (involving the public and the ATC), Community Survey/Map Comments (in-person or by online option), Key Person Interviews (Barb will lead this effort with help from the ATC), and an Open House Plan Review Session. They stressed that the ATC's input is very helpful. Another step in the process is the pre-charrette planning and assessment. This involves reviewing existing trail plans/studies, reviewing the community health needs assessment, developing a list of potential projects and ideas for consideration and identifying priority corridors/areas. Mark said these will need to be provided either digitally or hard copy. Next in the process would be the planning charrette. This will help gain a consensus on the projects and actions that will be promoted in the Plan. This step needs to be done early enough to be useable. Mark is thinking around March/April. Action strategies will be the next step. Ideally, this should be done around May. This step will identify wanted outcomes, resources, partnerships, benefits and next steps for the plan. The next step in the schedule will be the implementation strategy. This will identify the costs, who's responsible for implementation, any partners, funding sources and timeframes. It will also include a summary implementation matrix which is a breakdown of the projects in the plan. Ideally, this step will happen in June. Plan development is the last step in the process. First, EADS Group will provide a working draft (July), then a draft plan (August), then a final plan (September) and then adoption by September 30.

Matt stated the ATC is unique in that this is a County-wide plan for the Walk Works grant. Most of the plans funded in the past have been municipal or multi-municipal. Mark mentioned that Indiana County had done an update to their plan. In the process of being adopted, EADS Group delivered the plan, and Indiana County wanted to have a 30 day review period. Comments came in that had to be addressed and that held up the process. Then, they wanted to take the revised plan back to their planning commission for review, which added more time. Barb mentioned if we feel we need a 30 day public review period before adoption (taking it to the Commissioners), let them know so that they can plan accordingly. Mark wanted to clarify who needs to review the plan. Jim said the ATC would be the recommending body to the Commissioners. The ATC could have the Planning Commission review it, but that wasn't their roll to be a part of the recommendation. Mark asked what level of review the Commissioners need to have. Matt and Jim both said the Commissioners are usually comfortable with the ATC's recommendations. Matt feels with this group of Commissioners they will attend the public input sessions. Matt explained to the EADS Group that the ATC are all appointed volunteers by the Commissioners. Some are advisory roles and some are active members of the committee. The ATC is an advisory committee to the County Commissioners. ATC reviews active transportation projects, plan for active transportation projects and make recommendations to the Commissioners. But, it is up to them to act. Mark was just making sure the ATC had a good working relationship and didn't foresee any issues with the Commissioners. Everyone felt it shouldn't be a problem. Debra and Jim mentioned the ATC is always proactive when providing the Commissioners with any details and information.

Because the ATC meets the last Friday of each month, Mark asked if there was flexibility with the time. Matt said this plan is going to be the major project through September also working parallel

with a piece that the plan will encompass. That being segments 1, 13 and 19 of the Mainline Canal 9/11 corridor. He feels the EADS Group just being a part of this committee would be easiest. Mark said they may not always be able to be physically present at the meetings, but they can join online via Zoom. The ATC is agreeable to that. Mark inquired about how the EADS Group would be receiving data. Jim said the ATC could do a link to the County Planning Department's website to receive large quantities of data, that way Jim could provide multiple documents at one time.

Mark asked about the most recent health assessment. Jim believes that 2021 is the most recent. Laura believes Penn Highlands is mandated to do them on a two year cycle, but she's not totally certain. She didn't think that there was one done for 2022. She said that the 2021 assessment is available to download on Penn Highlands's website. George asked Matt about the trail plan. Matt said there is the Mainline Canal Greenway trail and the other studies were the Southern Alleghenies Greenways and bike & pedestrian plans. Jim said those could be made available to the EADS Group. George mentioned the ATC doesn't have all the trail plans because some are with DCNR. The ATC doesn't have the Standing Stone Trail plan or the Rothrock State Forest Trail plan. Mark mentioned that what's difficult with plans that receive this funding is that it ultimately comes from the PA Department of Health; and that their concerned about community health, meaning that trails and bike riding can be discussed, but their perspective is the more people walk and exercise the lower the health risk. Jim mentioned that the ATC needed to reach out to the healthcare community and the school districts for a point person and asked the members of the ATC for help with this. Jim mentioned that Sam Pearson did give them a point person from the Department of Health for this region, but ideally it would be better to have someone locally available. George said he feels community health is the ATC's number one priority. Not just physical health, but mental health as well. The second priority would be connectivity of the trails. Barb mentioned possibly connecting with someone from social services at the hospital as a point person.

Mark asked for input from the ATC about the established priorities and goals that have already been identified that the EADS Group should be made aware of or expectations of the plan. Jim said he wanted to emphasize again segments 1, 13 and 19 of the Mainline Canal and how the ATC has been trying to get those on the Southern Alleghenies Project Listing because if they're on the list, it would be easier to secure grant funding. They're accepting applications until March 31, 2023. Brian and Zach will continue to work on this now that there is an established deadline. George mentioned that the segments are one of the ATC's focuses, but that Huntingdon County is a big county and some of the rural areas feel disconnected and he feels we also need to work on connectivity of the different areas of the County. Matt noted that the Planning Commission looks at the County in 10 planning regions and that there are 48 municipalities. He feels it might make sense to look at those regions and see what projects the ATC can do. He said one that comes to his mind is Warriors Mark/Franklin Township which is adjacent to Centre County and the part of Centre County they're connected to has a great inter-connected network of bicycle/pedestrian pathways. It might make sense for the planning region to connect to their neighbors to the east. George noted we have an extensive network of game lands roads that are open for biking and hiking that would get people off the main road. He feels that there is a lot of potential out there.

Mark inquired if there are any local projects (on a municipal level). Brian mentioned one he's worked on and did some conceptual work for and they're continuing to work on it. In Mount

Union Borough is a PA Walk Works route loop that's already been designated for the Bricktown Unity Trail. They're looking at trying to upgrade it for sidewalks and ADA ramps. It's a perpendicular loop for the 9/11 Memorial Trail that goes through the Borough that would connect the school, some parks and a recently completed canoe/kayak launch.

Vince mentioned that he believes our biggest issue throughout the region is having different groups that have ideas for projects and the missing piece, typically, is the municipalities. PennDot is helpful with producing different studies, but PennDot can't own and maintain these projects, and for municipalities these projects can be a big deal because of budgets, maintenance, parking issues, etc. He feels getting municipalities on board is key. His recommendation is to have a municipal outreach component to this plan. He feels it is critical to getting these projects/ideas off the ground. Judy mentioned Alexandria is having a transportation safety study done next week because of increased accidents on the main street of Alexandria Borough. She noted they have the Lower Trail and would like to see a continuation of the bike trail coming down into their community through Canal or Main Street. Judy also mentioned they have pedestrian walking increasing throughout the community and they have sidewalk needs. As a municipality, they're trying their best. Mark stated from what he's hearing, municipalities that do have higher assets, like Alexandria, should get higher priority.

Jim and Matt brought the EADS Group up to speed about Route 33 in the Borough and Henderson Township and the issue of who owns the right-of-way. Stating that it should be done by survey and then doing the conveyance from PennDot to an entity. Jim doesn't know what entity would take it over (Huntingdon Borough or Henderson Township.) That would have to get decided upon by engaging the Borough and Henderson Township. Jim noted that Mark suggested engaging municipalities and boroughs. Matt mentioned there is a precedent in Bedford County of one municipality owning a trail corridor through other municipalities. The H & BT Rail Trail is largely owned by Broad Top Township, but extends through multiple municipalities.

Chris noted the grant that was mentioned in the packet that the Borough put in for was to get from the Flagpole trails through Blair Park to that point. The Borough's goal was to attach the Flagpole trails to get to there. Matt noted that when the EADS Group reviews the Mainline Canal Greenway study, it recommends going through an existing arch on the west side of Standing Stone Creek, making a loop to come up the grade and establishing another bridge (making 4 bridges within 200 yards of each other) for bicycle/pedestrian traffic. The ATC has talked about this, but they don't know if that is truly feasible, simply because of the elevation that has to be gained and that it would be in a floodway.

Mark asked what some of the ultimate goals of the ATC were and to take those ideas/priorities and get a game plan together. Matt feels one of the highest priorities is getting the Mainline Canal Greenway Trail from county line to county line because it connects communities. It can be a commuting corridor for active transportation because of that reason. Also, because of the extensive water trails through the County, canoeing and kayaking are active transportation modes as well.

Laura mentioned, especially with pedestrians and biking, she thinks it's important that we keep this equity piece in mind throughout the process because not everybody who's commuting along Route 22 is doing it because they want the exercise. There is a sizeable part of Huntingdon

County's population that doesn't have access to motorized vehicles or the money to pay for gas. She said back in 2010 she was looking at some data while preparing a grant, and she believes it stated 24% of Mount Union residents had no vehicle access. Neal mentioned that it would be helpful to find out where this percentage is most concentrated and put some resources there. Brian noted one of the areas that was mentioned was a connection (which would partially be on the 9/11 Memorial Trail) with the community of Kistler. There's not a great path connecting it to Mount Union and it is fairly hazardous for someone traveling by bike. The people in Kistler use Mount Union for all their needs (groceries, pharmacy, etc.) and the connection between the two communities is very poor. He said it's a fairly short segment, but it would be a tremendous benefit for that community (this is part of segment 19.) Neal also mentioned getting a point person from the Agricultural community, reaching out to the rural areas of the community and sporting organizations as well.

Laura asked if there is a concrete plan for reaching out to healthcare and education sectors. Matt stated they definitely need to be invited to be a part of the Steering Committee for the plan and he doesn't have any objections with them joining the committee as standing members. Jim is going to reach out to Jennifer Mitchell, Superintendent for Huntingdon Area School District. Debra is going to reach out to Joe to see if he's interested or knows of anybody from the staff at Penn Highlands who would possibly be interested in joining. ATC also wants to reach out to more of the townships. Brian suggested he may be able to get the ATC some contact information.

Laura shared the following website:

<https://www.phhealthcare.org/health-wellness/community-health-needs-assessment>

John Turack shared the following websites:

<https://mainlinecanalgreenway.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Greenway-Map.jpg>

<https://mainlinecanalgreenway.org/>

<https://mainlinecanalgreenway.org/experiencing-the-greenway/places-to-visit-z/>

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 24, 2023 at 9:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Reck
Assistant Community Development Administrator