

Meeting Minutes
Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee
Friday, February 24, 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:

Mark Lazzari (EADS Group), Alisha Grove (attending for Wendy Melius), Charles Harper, Brian Wisner, Judy Scott, Jen Bellis, Chris Stevens, Andrew Sharp, Jim Lettiere, George Conrad, Matt Price, Debra Clark-Loner, Zach Lee, Jayme Reck, Vince Greenland, Laura White, Neal Fogle (Penn State Extension) and John Turack (Penn State Extension).

Not in attendance:

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 27, 2023. Matt asked for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Judy made the motion and Laura seconded it. All were in favor.

The next item up for discussion was a status update regarding segments 1, 13 and 19 on the Southern Alleghenies Candidate Project listing. Brian suggested splitting the segments up separately as requests and then discussing potential sponsors for each segment. He said the goal is to have this done by the end of March. The sponsors would act as administrator of the funds and administer the funds locally. Jim offered the County Planning Department, but upon a discussion with Vince, who said when applying for funding the sponsor takes on the ownership/maintenance responsibilities for the project, Jim suggested the sponsor be listed as to-be-determined. Brian said the main point is getting the segments on the list, but it will require a lot of behind the scenes work to start developing them further (concepts and cost estimates.)

Jim mentioned the State of the County meeting and there was a question asked about development of a trail authority. Matt said Commissioner Sather spoke to him a few days after the meeting and said the Commissioners are open to the concept of a trail authority that would potentially own corridors. There are existing authorities (general, rail, etc.) which act as pass through entities to receive and administer grants and eventually take ownership afterwards, but a trail authority would be different. An example that Matt suggested was Bedford County, where one municipality owns a trail corridor that goes through multiple municipalities. Broad Top Township/Bedford County owns most of the corridor for Huntingdon and Broad Top Rail Trail that extends through multiple municipalities. So, Huntingdon Borough could own the trail through Henderson Township or Brian suggested the trail authority could have a maintenance agreement with the municipalities. Matt mentioned that the PennDOT study referencing segment 1 was available to view. It shows 4 alternatives to adding potential bike lanes and sidewalks through Porter Township from existing Alfarata Trail to Barree Road.

Next, Jim introduced Andrew Sharp, GIS Mapping Director with Huntingdon County. He will serve as an ex-officio member of the ATC. Andrew shared a map of all County roads and trails with the ATC, explaining that trails are mapped in case dispatch would need to be sent out in the event of an emergency. He said the Mapping Department can provide recreational information about the trails, which would include the type, ownership, and if the trail is good for hiking/biking/snowmobile/ATV/skiing/horseback-riding and water trails. Andrew also mentioned that there have been some web mapping and a couple of story maps completed or started. For example, there is a walking tour showing art destinations within Huntingdon Borough. They've also worked on projects with the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau. For example, the Boots, Bikes and Boats program with story map (boats portion not finished.) This introduced trails and included a promotional video for the Allegrippis Trail System. George asked if they knew which trail was the most popular. Andrew stated that the Mapping Department doesn't maintain usage data, but the Allegrippis Trail, Lower Trail and the Thousand Steps are popular. George mentioned that trails for Tuscarora State Forest are needed on the handout map provided and asked Andrew if people inform them when there are re-routes on a trail. Andrew stated that people will get in contact with them and the Mapping Department will put together a rough map showing the proposed re-route. Ideally, the person/group will let them know if it's been accepted. He said the problem with trails, unlike roads, is there's no central authority for doing re-routes. Jim mentioned that there are 27 organizations related to trails throughout the County. Mark mentioned he is going to touch base with Andrew to get the trail info for the active transportation plan.

The sidewalk mapping concept (examples provided by Sam Pearson-PA Walkworks.) was discussed further. Jim stated that \$5,000 was budgeted from the County Planning Department to go towards the consultant, and with the consultant coming in at \$25,000, that additional \$5,000 is available. Sam Pearson suggested using some of that money to do sidewalk mapping. Examples were provided to ATC members. She also said Walkworks could possibly help with funding to do a sidewalk study as well. Jim stated that he believes it would be an inventory of existing sidewalks, where there are gaps and where new sidewalks could be installed to provide better connectivity. His thoughts are that this would be the more populated areas of the County (Huntingdon and Mount Union Boroughs.) Chris mentioned that Huntingdon Borough does have some sidewalk information available, and Judy stated that Alexandria Borough has some information available as well. Brian stated that Mount Union Borough has only been looking at areas for sidewalk improvements, not so much an inventory. Mark stated the example that stood out to him was Verona because the EADS Group worked with them on active transportation planning. Verona had additional funding available and EADS suggested looking at priority routes if doing the whole Borough wasn't feasible. The goal of Verona's sidewalk mapping was to show problem areas to be fixed. Mark stated that step one would be to get a layer of sidewalks and step two would be to show the problem areas. Laura suggested it would be important to include crosswalks as well.

Matt asked Vince if PennDOT has a map showing where shoulders are wide enough for bike travel. Vince stated they have a trail map in GIS of bike maps, but don't have one showing sidewalks. To designate a lane as a bike lane it has to be 5' wide. Currently, they don't have a way to see which roads have 5' shoulders, but it's definitely something they could look into. Vince also mentioned that if municipalities/groups shared their information with PennDOT it would be extremely helpful, so that both entities could use the data.

The next item was EADS Group input/update of data needs. Mark stated that Jim provided EADS with existing plans and that their group was currently looking over those. He said they needed to look at demographic data to see areas in the County with higher needs for active transportation. Brian said there are different census blocks that have environmental justice areas. Matt suggested commute/food ways connecting boroughs with higher population centers, those being Huntingdon, Smithfield, Mount Union, Alexandria and Orbisonia/Rockhill. Jen mentioned that she's on a steering committee with Southern Alleghenies and that they are currently working on sending out a survey to County residents on what their needs on accessibility to different areas are. She said data from that may be helpful. Brian suggested that DEP Environmental Justice has a website that shows different areas that are designated. Mark wants to look at topic areas to address for next month and to be thinking about a time and location for a public workshop, possibly April with an evening timeframe. Matt suggested varying locations if doing multiple public meetings that way it would include all parts of the County. Following the public workshop to get resident's input would be the planning charrette, which is more of an internal workshop. This would take place late April/early May. The ATC still needs to reach out to the education/healthcare/agriculture industries. Deb mentioned that she emailed Joel Myers from Penn Highlands, but hadn't heard back as of yet. Mark mentioned doing a roundtable on community survey questions at next month's meeting and he will reach out to Verona about their sidewalk study and see if he can get the ATC more information.

Jim mentioned the Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony will be on Thursday, March 9, 2023 and if anybody would like to attend they can contact the County Planning Department. Zach mentioned Southern Alleghenies has been talking internally that they have received some additional funding through their transportation program, and are thinking about possibly hiring an intern or contracting the work out to do a sidewalk gap assessment for the entire region. He's not sure of the timeframe, but if the ATC wanted to move ahead with a sidewalk study they could coordinate together so there's no overlap of information. Vince mentioned that sidewalks aren't just a state issue, they're a local and private issue, so they should be planned i.e., land development plans.

Vince stated that on March 1, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. at Shade Gap Elementary School the 522 Study, which is from Shade Gap to the Turnpike interchange, will be discussed. It will show eight or nine areas for potential projects and high level corridor items. Once this information is gathered, Southern Alleghenies can use this to move forward on projects. Matt asked if anybody from the ATC can attend, and George volunteered to attend.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayme Reck, Assistant Community Development Administrator