

**Erie Regional Planning Commission
MPO Combined Technical Advisory and Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2023**

PRESENT: Matt Rogers, Haley Ziemba, Erie County Engineers Office; Scott Ockunzzi, ODOT District 3; Nate Vogt, ODOT Central Office; Tony Valerius, City of Vermilion; Arin Blair, John Orzech, James Stacey, City of Sandusky; Nick Katsaros, First Energy; Gary Boyle, Perkins Township; Erik Engle, City of Huron; Dave Foster, ERPC Chair; Hank Solowiej, Tim King, Emily Galloway, Kevin Cannon, Erie County staff.

Mr. Cannon called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. The meeting was hybrid where participants were given an option to appear in person or through a web-ex online meeting. Mr. Cannon noted that Mr. Orzech, Ms. Blair, Mr. Vogt, and Mr. Solowiej were attending the meeting virtually.

Agenda Item #1 Approval of the November 22, 2022 Combined TAC/Policy Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Cannon presented the minutes of the November 17, 2022 Combined TAC/Policy meeting. Mr. Boyle motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Mr. Foster seconded the motion; all voted aye and the motion was passed. No further discussion was held on this item.

Agenda Item #2 Election of 2023 Officers

Mr. Cannon presented the chairs from last year of Mr. Shenigo as Chair of the board and Mr. Boyle as Vice Chair, and opened discussion for any new nominees for 2023 for the MPO board. After hearing no new nominees, Mr. Cannon discussed in previous years that the board is able to motion to keep the current chairs as they were last year. Mr. Foster motioned to approve the previous chairs for 2023, and Mr. Engle seconded the motion; all voted aye and the motion was passed. No further discussion was held on this item.

Agenda Item #3 Consideration of support for the Route 23 Connect Concept

Mr. Cannon presented the Route 23 Connect Concept study that ODOT had cancelled regarding an improved corridor connection between Toledo and Columbus, citing costs. Mr. Cannon noted that TMACOG and Ottawa County Commissioners had completed resolutions continuing the support of the study, and the MPO board could draft a letter of support for the project. Mr. Boyle opened discussion, highlighting how the project had previously been considered in previous decades but was never committed to. Mr. Ockunzzi said District 3 has limited to no involvement with the project outside of the district. Mr. Rogers argued there was no benefit to the project for the county, with most impacts being west of the area. Mr. Stacey continued discussion with the support of a multilane north south connection, and the board discussed impacts on increased north/south routes to the area as it affects the ongoing Freight Plan. After further discussion on area projects, Mr. Engle motioned to draft a letter of support to continue the project, and Mr. Valerius seconded the motion; all voted aye and the motion was passed. Mr. Cannon said he would draft the letter of support for signature by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Agenda Item #4 Solicitation for SFY 2026 TA Funds

Mr. Cannon noted the MPO was behind schedule from its policy on opening solicitation for Transportation Alternative (TA) funds for 2026. Mr. Boyle spoke to allowing the application deadline to the middle of May to give applicants additional time, which the board concurred with. Mr. Cannon

proposed the second Friday in May, which Mr. Valerius noted as May 12th. The applications were to be on the website and sent to the MPO, and would be accepted in person or electronically. Mr. Boyle motioned to open solicitation for SFY 2026 TA funds with the extended timeline, and Mr. Ockunzzi seconded the motion; all voted aye and the motion was passed. No further discussion was held on this item.

UPDATES

Roster Update: Mr. Cannon presented to the board the current Policy Committee members and designees, and the TAC members and designees. Mr. Cannon said these members were determined from the 2014 prospectus, and 2022 Work Program the MPO produces. Mr. Cannon noted if there were any discrepancies to contact him following the meeting to make sure the appropriate voting member and/or designee was included on the list. Mr. Cannon included the Mr. Katsaros had previously noted that he could not be a voting member on the TAC board, and a motion was brought forward to move Mr. Katsaros to a non-voting member. Mr. Foster motioned to approve the member to non-voting, and Mr. Engle seconded; all voted aye and the motion was passed. No further discussion was held on this item.

Mr. Cannon also listed additional committees as were under the MPO. Mr. Cannon listed the members of the Project Selection Committee as appointed by the Policy Committee in 2022. The other committees noted were the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), and Safety Committee (SC). Mr. Cannon noted these committees had not been regularly meeting due to low staffing with ERPC, but is aiming to return to having quarterly committees that will return this summer.

Administrative Modifications: Mr. Cannon noted three administrative modifications since the last meeting in November. The first project was PID #113960, which increased the construction phase from \$998,232.06 to \$1,132,686.30 in SFY 2023. The second project was PID #114640, which decreased the construction phase from \$2,951,046.27 to \$2,538,546.27 in SFY 2022. The final project is PID #113958, decrease in the construction phase from \$1,173,941.56 to \$986,594.80 in SFY 2024.

SFY 2024-2027 TIP: Mr. Cannon discussed the SFY 2024-2027 TIP for the MPO. Mr. Cannon mentioned the TIP is a listing of every project in the MPO over the next four years, and is currently open for public comment on the MPO website. Public involvement will be until April 10th, and that the MPO is preparing for its open house March 27th. Mr. Ockunzzi noted that the District 3 open house would be the following day on March 28th. Mr. Cannon finished by noting the Final draft TIP will need board approval in the April meeting.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): Mr. Cannon discussed the UPWP as required yearly by the MPO to be reported to the ODOT district and central office. Mr. Cannon said the first draft is in and is currently receiving updates and comments on the work program. After all of the comments were received, Mr. Cannon would be forward the draft work program to the MPO for review before the April meeting, where it will need board approval. Mr. Cannon finished by noting the final work program is due May 5th.

US 6 Connectivity Corridor Project Update: Mr. Ockunzzi said that the city of Sandusky is finalizing the Sandusky Bay Pathway portion of the project. The project is starting field work on the Pathway and Connectivity Corridor to include the 5 round-a-bouts and multi-use pathway. The project has received all local funds that had been requested, and after it was determined the total project cost had increased, and that the additional cost should be covered by the awarded \$7 million TRAC grant the

project is expected to receive shortly. The FHWA is reviewing the draft agreement currently with delivery estimated to be before the next MPO meeting.

2022 Freight Plan Update: Mr. Cannon noted that ERPC with Gannett Fleming has moved into Phase 2 of the freight plan update, and were currently working on drafting a strategic plan on accordance with the goals. Mr. King and Mr. Katsaros spoke about the February workshop for the freight plan update, and that the project received good community input and support. Mr. King petitioned for contacts with local freight handlers, noting that area carriers had been difficult to get in contact with for their input on the plan update.

Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program: Mr. Cannon brought to the attention of the board a grant opportunity by Federal Rail looking to encourage projects for grade separations at railroad crossings. Mr. Cannon noted the grant was present by Mr. Art Arnold, a stakeholder on the Freight Plan Update. The grant is expected to be highly competitive statewide. Mr. Ockunzzi included reaching out to District 3 and Mr. Andrew Shepler if members of the board had interest in the grant. Mr. Rogers mentioned crossings at Skadden and Bogart that could be looked at, and Mr. Valerius cited quiet zones in the Vermilion Road area that could potentially benefit from the project. Further discussion was held on individual crossings in the area. Mr. Rogers asked for clarification on the funding amount of the grant. Mr. Cannon noted the budgets currently were proposed, but would reach back out to Mr. Arnold for clarification regarding funding.

No other business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Kevin Cannon, Transportation Planner
Erie County Offices of Regional Planning
Metropolitan Planning Organization