

Upper Bucks Public Transportation Feasibility Study
Steering Committee Meeting #1
May 25, 2021

1. **Introductions**— Rich Braehler, Director of Transportation for Bucks County opened the discussion with introductions of county personnel and a recap of how this study came to be. Stating that:
 - Upper Bucks hasn't had dedicated train or bus service since the early 1980s.
 - More recently, an area shuttle service to the SEPTA Regional Rail Station in Lansdale was run by TMA Bucks for a year between 2004 and 2005 but was shut down because of low ridership.
 - In 2019, the County conducted a transportation survey of residents in the study area to gauge interest in the potential for public transportation. The results indicated that there was interest in public transportation for area.
 - Based of those results the County applied for and received a grant to conduct this study through DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative program. He also spoke to the fact that it is the county's hope that this plan will yield cost effective transportation measures for the near or medium term.
 - Consultant project manager Chad Dixson of McMahon Associates introduce their team including public engagement lead Natasha Manbeck and their sub consultants, Foursquare, team members Andrew Zalewski and Boris Palchik.
2. **Project Overview** - Chad Dixson provided an overview of the project
 - Project Scope - Chad said that the project will look at up to 3 transportation modes for the study area. He also stated that this is the first of 5 steering committee meetings, with other public meetings and focus groups also a part of the development process.
 - Project Timeline - Chad mentioned that the project was already underway with the data gathering portion starting in May and will last until July. The alternatives analysis phase will start in July and end in October, Cost and funding analysis will start in October and end in January 2022, with the final feasibility report to come out between January and April of 2022.
 - Project Study Area - Chad then reviewed the 9 municipality study area noting it is home to 58,000 people with 29,000 employed within the area. He also shared commuter data noting that the region has a higher percentage of people that drive alone to work than the county overall and has a Public Transit use percentage of less than 1 percent.
3. **Interactive Partner Section** - Natasha Manbeck then guided the meeting through the interactive partner section where the group was prompted with 3 questions. Following each question group members were invited to discuss their responses.
 - The first poll question asked members "Public Transportation in the study area must connect and serve (blank)". Downtown Centers, Employment Centers, and Regional Transit Centers received the most votes.

- The second question was a rapid response question that asked members to name origins or destinations inside of the study area. There were many responses but after discussion the group agreed that the areas historic downtowns, Upper Bucks County Community College Campus, and the 309 shopping corridor should receive service.
- The subsequent follow up question asked members to name destinations outside the study area. The group mentioned Allentown, Peddlers Village, Doylestown, New Hope, and the northern 309 corridor. There was discussion on a link to Trenton as that could connect people to Philadelphia and New York City but it was agreed that kind of service would not be effective.
- The final question asked member to name barriers to operating public transportation in this area, virtually everyone cited costs or related terms such as funding or operational challenges as the primary barrier in this area. In this portion Stephen Noll spoke length regarding the challenges his organization faced operating the shuttle that ran in 2004 and 2005, saying that it's an hour commute from Lansdale to Quakertown for a shuttle on good traffic day. Paul Stephanoff while desiring a service more akin to a train or shuttle was understanding that this service takes significant capital cost, citing the Perkasio tunnel as the lead cost driver for a return of Quakertown's former train line. Lastly, Andy Zalewski further drove home this point noting that the SEPTA extension to Wawa cost 180 million for a 3 mile segment.

4. **Roundtable Discussion** - Natasha then continued to the round table discussion where each member was permitted a few minutes to speak what they see as transit needs for their community or the people they serve

- Steve Noll, TMA Bucks County - Looking within Bucks County, we find that on the Doylestown DART service that virtually all the ridership comes from senior citizens using the service to get to shopping and medical appointments. Furthermore, a circulator would have to have a connection to Doylestown, area senior living centers, route 309, and historic downtowns. Lastly he stressed that serious consideration should be given to finding a connection to Allentown and the Lehigh Valley.
- Ed Scholl of Quakertown Borough - He agrees with the TMA's comments but does see viability in trying to build a connection to Philadelphia. Specifically as the Quakertown area's income grows and young families move to the area, transit to both Philadelphia and Allentown will be important.
- Paul Stephanoff, Richland Township - He noted that Richland Township and the area as a whole is spread out. He mentioned the importance of building connections between Quakertown and Richlandtown and their local 55 plus communities.
- Marianne Morano, East Rockhill Township - There does not seem to be a major need for this service in East Rockhill as it is a bedroom community.
- Jeff Tulone, Perkasio Borough- Agreed with the TMA and just stressed connections to senior communities, Grandview, and Saint Luke's Medical Center.
- Eileen Brady, Sellersville Borough - Stressed connections to employers, Quakertown, Doylestown, and Grand View Hospital, and their local cultural attraction the Sellersville Theater. She also mentioned Sellersville is starting an economic development plan and that this could factor into it.

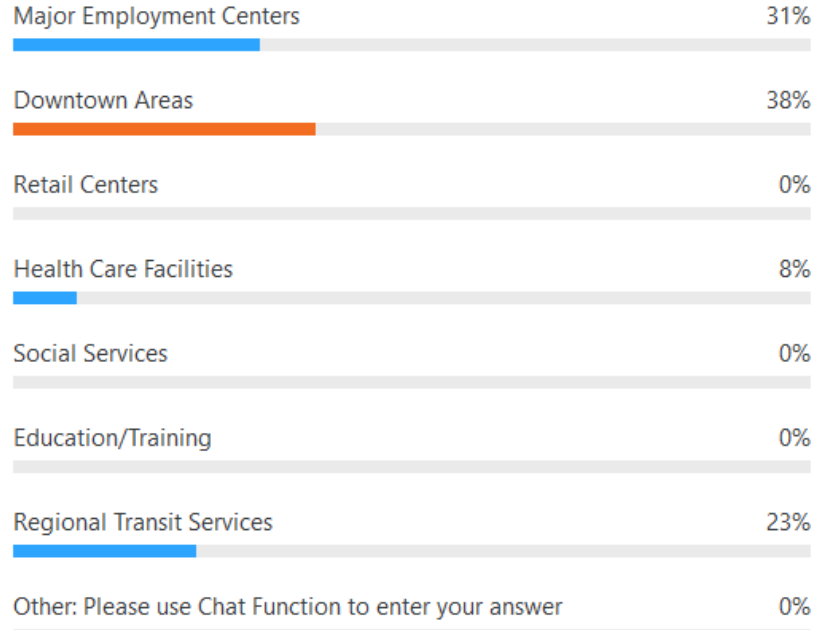
- Fran Hanney, Penn DOT- Speaking as a resident of a neighboring municipality in Montgomery County stressed that the Pennsburg to Quakertown Corridor, the route 663/313 corridor, and Bethlehem Pike Corridor should all be looked as potential alignments.
 - Danielle Bodnar, Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce - She agreed with the previous comments. She noted that the Chamber does not an official survey of members or employers to gauge their interest. She stressed that we need to make sure the area's manufacturing firms were being served by this potential service, especially to help their workforce.
 - Spencer Gober, DVRPC- Asked that we consider looking for concentrations of households with no cars as the services are studied.
 - AJ Jordon, LANTA- Stressed that outside of serving people, shuttle routes could help address social and economic development concerns and could be factored into developing a shuttle service. Also that political boundaries are an issue as such as with paratransit because that service crosses county boundaries that can interfere with access and timing.
 - Mark Cassel, SEPTA - Asked us to review the Northern Montgomery County public transit study by Baker, as it also identifies a strong pull to the Lehigh Valley. Mentioned that funding will be a barrier and stressed to start small and grow.
5. **Travel Transit Needs** - Andy Zalewski discussed types of transit and how they will evaluate who needs what kind of transit, saying that the travel needs will dictate service levels and type.
- He reviewed six types of transit they were: Micro Transit, Circulator, Fixed Route, Human Services, Deviated Fixed Route, and Commuter Bus.
 - He closed with a poll question that asked "What do you consider the most urgent transit need for the region?" The top three responses were Local circulation to key destinations, Links to Lanta and SEPTA, and connect vulnerable residents to social and medical services.
6. **Conclusion and Next Steps** - Chad closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and telling the group the first public meeting will be on June 24th at 6:00 pm and the 2nd steering committee meeting will be in July. He asked the steering committee to help promote the public meeting on June 24th.

Meeting Attendees

Agency	Contact	Email
Bucks County Planning Commission	Rich Brahler, Director of Transportation Planning	rgbrahler@buckscounty.org
Bucks County Planning Commission	Evan Stone, Executive Director	estone@buckscounty.org
Bucks County Planning Commission	Christian Regosch, Transportation Planner	cpregosch@buckscounty.org
Bucks County Planning Commission	Matt Walters	mmwalters@buckscounty.org
McMahon	Chad Dixson	cdixson@mcmahonassociates.com
McMahon	Natasha Manbeck	nmanbeck@mcmahonassociates.com
Four Square	Andrew Zalewski	azalewski@foursquareitp.com
DVRPC	Spencer Gober, Senior Planner	sgober@dvrpc.org
East Rockhill Township	Marianne K. Morano, Township Manager	mmorano@eastrockhilltownship.org
LANTA	Brendan Cotter	Bcotter@lantabus-pa.gov
LANTA	AJ Jordan	AJordan@lantabus-pa.gov
PennDOT	Fran Hanney, Traffic Control Specialist	FHanney@pa.gov
Perkasie Borough	Jeffrey Tulone	publicworks@perkasieborough.org
Quakertown Borough	Ed Scholl, Director of Economic Development	edscholl@verizon.net
Richland Township	Paul Stepanoff, Township Manager	paul@richlandtownship.org
Sellersville Borough	Eileen Bradley Borough Manager	manager@sellersvilleboro.org
Senator Mensch	Lisa Walter	lwalter@pasen.gov
SEPTA	Mark Cassel, Director of Service Planning	MCassel@SEPTA.org
TMA of Bucks County	Steve Noll, Executive Director	Steve@bctma.com
Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce	Danielle Bodnar, Executive Director	dbodnar@ubcc.org

Poll Results

1. Public Transportation in the Upper Bucks area should connect and serve...



1. What do you consider the most urgent transit need in the region? Please select two (Multiple choice)

