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Transportation group decides to revise goals

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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Saying that there will always be important transportation issues in Fayette County, members of the County Transportation Alliance decided Thursday to keep the group going while revising some of goals.

When the alliance was formed, the primary goal of the grassroots-lobbying group concerned with county's transportation infrastructure was to work toward completion of all segments of the Mon/Fayette Expressway. Now that it appears that the Mon/Fayette Expressway will be completed, members felt time to evaluate the alliance's existence.

Brownsville Mayor Norma Ryan mentioned that in the future the aesthetics of projects should be considered, pointing out that the refurbished Lane Bane Bridge is not attractive. Ryan said she was under the impression the design was as a result of a federal mandate, but on a trip to Florida, saw a newly constructed bridge that was very aesthetically pleasing.

Member Bob Junk suggested that two new goals could be added, including the completion of renovations of Route 21 and working to keep viewsheds.

Following the comments, co-chairperson Donna Holdorf said she would include the new points in the goals of the alliance to present to the group at the next meeting. "I'm hearing that we don't want to fold our tents and go away," she said.

During an update on progress on the Sheepskin Trail, Tammy Shell reported that the project hit a snag that could increase the cost between \$3 million and \$4 million.

She said a live rail line is located along the proposed trail in Dunbar and building a bridge to cross cause the increase in cost. Junk suggested that with the new development, there could be problem the trail making it to Uniontown.

The members also discussed the adopted 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which includes a list of upcoming road projects. On top of the list is Matthew Drive Extension and Matthe upgrades. The Masontown Bridge project on Route 21 between Fayette and Greene counties is at the top of the list.

After reviewing the projects, Ryan suggested that improvements to Route 4022 should be added to TIP, because it is getting a lot of use by vehicles traveling to the State Correctional Institution at F. "I think it's something we can't neglect," she said.

Shell also reported that the Pennsylvania Planners Association bestowed two awards on Fayette County projects, including the Mon/Fayette Expressway land use plan and the Fayette County strategic plan. She said Fayette is the first county in 10 years to win two out of the five yearly awards given by the association.

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At the beginning of the meeting, the alliance selected four individuals to serve as co-chairpersons. include Holdorf, Shell, Junk and Tom McGrew.

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