



Centre Region Council of Governments OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

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TO: Bob Crum, Secretary
Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization

FROM: James C. Steff, Executive Director
Centre Region Council of Governments (COG)

DATE: February 11, 2008

SUBJECT: COG Transportation Committee Recommendations: Priorities for Centre County MPO Long Range Transportation Plan and 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

From 1997 through 2005, the Preliminary Engineering phase of the former Eastern Inner Loop project was advanced by the Centre Region COG, acting as sponsor of the project on behalf of six funding partners (College, Ferguson, Harris, and Patton Townships, Centre County government, and the Pennsylvania State University). In November 2005, the COG General Forum formally terminated the Eastern Inner Loop study, and asked the COG Transportation Committee to prepare a proposal for identifying and evaluating alternatives to the Eastern Inner Loop that addressed the project needs.

In 2006, the COG Transportation Committee developed a proposed process for evaluating alternatives to the Eastern Inner Loop, and the process was approved by the COG General Forum in November 2006. The process specified that the Transportation Committee would review all of the Centre Region projects included in the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CCMPO's) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and then prioritize the Centre Region projects prior to the next update of the CCMPO's short-range (four-year) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Transportation Committee discussed the LRTP projects in the Centre Region at several meetings in 2007. In September 2007, the Transportation Committee approved several recommendations to the CCMPO for consideration as the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP is developed, and the LRTP is updated in 2008. The recommendations are specific to the highway projects listed in the LRTP, and address only highway projects located within the Centre Region:

- *Do not advance any projects from the LRTP above the projects on the current adopted TIP.*

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- Do not advance the Park Avenue Intersection project (North Atherton Street to Burrowes Road) until the project is supported by State College Borough.
- Maintain the priority of the Route 26/45 Intersection (Village of Pine Grove Mills) and the Park Avenue Widening projects, and advance the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase of one or both of the projects if funding is available on the new 2009-2012 TIP. In the future, should the proposed cost of the Route 26/45 Intersection project be estimated at greater than \$10 million, consideration should be given to revisiting the Route 26 Pine Grove Mills Bypass project as an alternative to the intersection improvements. The Pine Grove Mills Bypass project was beyond the fiscal constraint limits for the LRTP, and is not currently included on the Plan.
- Maintain the priorities of the West College Avenue Widening, Regional Traffic Management Center, Waddle Road Corridor, and Airport Connector Road projects at this time, but revisit the priorities if sufficient funding is made available on the 2009-2012 TIP or 2011-2014 TIP to permit one or more of the projects to advance. The need to revisit the projects may occur prior to the next major update of the LRTP in three years, or at the time that the next major update of the LRTP occurs. Consideration should also be given to reducing the scope of the Waddle Road Corridor project to include only the Waddle Road Interchange, which may result in a shift in priorities and change in the fiscal constraint analysis for the LRTP.

The Transportation Committee did not recommend any changes in priority for the **public transportation and pedestrian/ bicycle** projects in the Centre Region.

The discussion of **bridge** project priorities in the Centre Region was initiated in September 2007, and will continue in future months as PennDOT and the CCMPO continue to discuss priorities for state and municipal bridges. To date, the Transportation Committee has not made any recommendations about bridge projects. The Committee acknowledged that the CCMPO staff will be preparing a database to help prioritize municipal bridge projects, which may impact priorities for local bridges in the Centre Region that are on, or proposed to be included on, the LRTP.

On behalf of the COG Transportation Committee, thank you for considering the recommendations about **highway** projects in the Centre Region as the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP is developed and the LRTP is updated in 2008.