

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
PROCEDURES**

BY AND BETWEEN

**THE CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CCMPO)
AND
THE CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CATA)**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into this 25th day of November, 2008 by and between the CCMPO and CATA.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has promulgated a regulation, published as 23 CFR § 450.314(a), which requires that “[t]he MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s)”; and

WHEREAS, the CCMPO is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the entirety of Centre County, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, CATA is a body corporate and politic that operates the publicly owned transit service within eight (8) municipalities of Centre County, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, CATA develops services and other projects within the same area over which the CCMPO has jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the CCMPO and CATA recognize the need for integrated, long-range planning for such services and projects within their shared service area; and

WHEREAS, the CCMPO and CATA seek to carry out public transit planning in compliance with the regulations and guidelines of the USDOT and its operating administrations, specifically the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and

WHEREAS, federal guidelines for transit planning include the following three stages: transportation systems planning, project planning, and environmental planning and review; and

WHEREAS, the CCMPO and CATA desire to adopt cooperative procedures that define specific roles and responsibilities for each.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto agree to adopt the following cooperative procedures, and to carry out the respective roles and responsibilities specified herein.

1) Incorporation of Recitals

The recitals above are hereby incorporated into the body of the MOU.

2) The Parties' General Intent

The parties will carry out public transit planning (including corridor and subarea planning) in a manner pursuant to guidelines of the USDOT, FHWA, and FTA for transportation systems planning, project planning and environmental planning and review.

This MOU does not abrogate, infringe upon, or modify any current memoranda of understanding, agreements, policies or procedures by and between the CCMPO and CATA.

3) Transportation Systems Planning

According to USDOT, transportation systems planning involves a holistic approach to evaluating state and regional transportation needs at the broadest level. It is a progression of planning activities that helps establish a context for sound policy decisions, and is an avenue for involving the public in transportation plans and projects to support the state and regional visions for the future. Transportation systems planning should lead to tangible products that ensure that local decisions affecting public transit are made in a comprehensive, inclusive manner. Some of these products include a multimodal, long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and a shorter-term transportation improvement program (TIP).

a. Roles and Responsibilities of the CCMPO in Transportation Systems Planning

The CCMPO shall:

- i. Produce, in consultation with CATA and its state and regional planning partners, a long range, multimodal, fiscally constrained transportation plan that identifies all regionally significant proposed facilities and any corridor or subarea studies that may result in such proposed facilities;
- ii. Ensure that corridor and subarea studies include development and analysis of appropriate transit options based on consultation with CATA;

- iii. Include CATA in technical oversight of corridor and subarea studies;
- iv. Develop and reach consensus on regional forecasts of population, employment, and land use;
- v. Coordinate with adjacent MPOs and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and appropriate state agencies to ensure consistency of travel demand forecasts with statewide and national forecasts of population, employment, and land use so that projects remain eligible for federal funding;
- vi. Work with adjacent MPOs, RPOs, and other affected operators (where necessary) on development and use of transportation planning and forecasting models and network representations to ensure consistency of models and adequacy for multi-modal analysis;
- vii. Develop, or have developed by an outside consultant, transportation models, and perform analysis of these models for the region;
- viii. Provide a forum for members to identify travel and transit needs, develop concepts for meeting these needs, and to identify the appropriate processes for advancing concepts; and,
- ix. Adopt a staged evaluation process to set priorities for transit projects based on appropriate criteria established collectively by the CCMPO, CATA, and state and regional partners. This process should allow for concepts to be identified, defined, screened, and developed in a phased, cost-effective manner to ensure that projects are feasible, and meet the needs of the region and the implementing agencies.

b. Roles and Responsibilities of CATA in Transportation Systems Planning

CATA, in consultation with the appropriate staff of the CCMPO, shall:

- i. Provide appropriate transit options for consideration in CCMPO corridor and subarea studies;
- ii. Participate in technical oversight of CCMPO corridor and subarea studies;

- iii. Provide technical assistance to the CCMPO in the development of needs statements, concept definitions, and determinations of physical and operational feasibility;
- iv. Perform such studies as necessary to sustain current operations, comply with federal and state requirements, and ensure integrity of existing operations and services. These studies should include, but are not limited to, operations and capacity studies, market research, customer surveys, definition and development of concepts for transit service and infrastructure improvements;
- v. Identify transit services and projects that cross the boundaries of the CCMPO, and therefore require planning and forecasting coordination with other MPOs and RPOs;
- vi. Cooperate with the CCMPO to develop methods of transit mode-specific forecasting and operations analysis consistent with regional and state projections;
- vii. Work with the CCMPO to apply transit demand methods and produce CATA's system-wide and project-specific travel demand forecasts;
- viii. Develop a staged process for advancing transit new start capital projects that includes:
 - 1. Identification of purpose and need;
 - 2. Development of problem statements;
 - 3. Identification of concepts;
 - 4. Development of transit concepts;
 - 5. Feasibility screening; and
 - 6. Identification of steps to advance through the FTA New Starts Evaluation & Rating and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes;
- ix. Fully involve the CCMPO in the staged project evaluation process, including all aspects of public outreach, as appropriate;
- x. Develop, and incorporate into the staged project evaluation process, criteria for transit project evaluation which shall be consistent with FTA's New Starts Evaluation and Rating Process,

transit operational feasibility requirements, and Pennsylvania State Plan and Development policies; and

- xii. Provide regular briefings to the CCMPO on transit planning activities.

4) Project Planning

As directed by FTA, and following the results of the transportation systems planning process, the project planning process focuses on a specific transportation need (or set of needs) in a given corridor or subarea, identifies alternative actions to address these needs, and generates the information needed to select a preferred project for implementation. This process is often referred to as “alternatives analysis”, and typically addresses such issues as costs, benefits, environmental and community impacts, and financial feasibility. Consequently, an alternatives analysis spans a wide range of technical disciplines, ranging from engineering, to ridership forecasting, to the natural and social sciences. The project planning process continues beyond the selection of a preferred capital investment strategy (or New Start for fixed guideway transit projects funded with discretionary FTA Section 5309 resources) and into further refinement and analysis, including completion of federal environmental review requirements, also known as the NEPA process.

a. Roles and Responsibilities of the CCMPO in Project Planning

The CCMPO shall:

- i. Provide assistance in securing approvals for transit planning projects in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), TIP, and other planning programs of the CCMPO;
- ii. Participate with and assist CATA in public outreach activities;
- iii. Where appropriate, participate in joint project planning with CATA and adjacent MPOs and RPOs to ensure consistency of planning assumptions, forecasts, and priority for projects planned to serve multiple MPO and/or RPO areas; and
- iv. Participate in technical oversight of transit project planning studies, and provide input to CATA during established comment periods and at other points as appropriate.

b. Roles and Responsibilities of CATA in Project Planning

CATA shall:

- i. Perform project planning and development studies to define transit concepts and advance projects through a staged development process;
- ii. Involve the CCMPO in project studies at the technical level, as appropriate;
- iii. Perform Alternatives Analysis (AA) studies for specific projects, in accordance with FTA guidance and regulations;
- iv. Prepare project specific travel demand forecasts and financial analyses based on adopted regional projections of travel demand, demographics, and employment;
- v. At the conclusion of AA studies, consult with the CCMPO and other interested parties on selection of preferred alternatives;
- vi. Prepare, or have prepared by an outside consultant, preliminary engineering, final engineering, and cost estimates for transit projects;
- vii. Identify and define projects that cross the boundaries of the CCMPO in order to facilitate consistency in planning assumptions, forecasts and priority among affected MPOs and RPOs;
- viii. Conduct public outreach activities and encourage public participation as required under all applicable federal and state laws and regulations;
- ix. Prepare information submittals as required for New Start project evaluation under FTA guidelines;
- x. Provide regular project briefings and opportunities for input to members and staff of the CCMPO; and
- xi. Negotiate Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGAs) with FTA for selected projects.

5) Environmental Planning and Review

As part of the federal grant application process, public transportation agencies are required to work with FTA to consider the social, economic and

environmental consequences of proposed projects and activities. The environmental review process required by NEPA, and other related laws, includes environmental impact analyses and the documentation thereof for public review. Smaller, relatively routine actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental impact are considered to be “categorically excluded” from extensive environmental analysis. For larger capital projects, environmental planning and review generally results in a detailed written statement on the environmental impacts of a proposed project, as well as alternatives to mitigate any harm to the community and the natural environment. Typical environmental reviews for proposed transit projects address the impact areas of air and water quality, noise and vibration, historic and cultural properties, parklands, contaminated lands, displacement of residences and businesses, and community preservation. During the federal environmental review process, public transportation agencies are expected to work cooperatively with state and local agencies to comply with state and local environmental laws.

a. Roles and Responsibilities of the CCMPO in Environmental Planning and Review

The CCMPO shall:

- i. Provide assistance in securing approvals work on Environmental Assessments (EAs), Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEISs), and Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs) in the UPWP, TIP, and other CCMPO planning programs;
- ii. Participate with and assist CATA in public outreach activities; and
- iii. Provide input to CATA during established comment periods and at other points as appropriate.

b. Roles and Responsibilities of CATA in Environmental Planning and Review

CATA shall:

- i. Prepare, or have prepared by an outside consultant, EAs, DEISs, and FEISs for specific transit projects in accordance with NEPA as well as guidance and regulations provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and FTA;
- ii. Conduct public outreach activities and encourage public participation as required under all applicable federal and state laws and regulations;

- iii. Provide regular briefings and opportunities for input to members and staff of the CCMPO; and
- iv. Consult with the CCMPO on programming and funding for long range project plans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto, intending to be legally bound, have executed this Memorandum of Understanding by their duly authorized officers or representatives, as of the date first above written.

ATTEST:

Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO)

Robert B. Jacobs, Secretary

Daniel D. Klees, Chairman

ATTEST:

Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

Hugh A. Mose, General Manager

John C. Spsychalski, Chairman