

**CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CCMPO)  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, March 27, 2007  
6:00 pm  
College Township Municipal Building**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members Present:**

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)
Bob Corman	Penns Valley Planning Region
John Elnitski	Benner Township
Chris Exarchos	Centre County
Elizabeth Goreham, Vice Chair	State College Borough
Dan Klees, Chair	College Township
Karen Michael (for Kevin Kline)	PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
George Pytel	Ferguson Township
Jadine Reese	Upper Bald Eagle Planning Region
Tom TenEyck	PennDOT Central Office
Jack Shannon	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
John Spychalski	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Frank Halderman	Bellefonte Borough
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**Others Present:**

Bob Crum	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Tom Zilla	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA – Recording Secretary
Mike Bloom	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office
Bob Jacobs	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office
Jim Eckert	Senator Jake Corman’s Office
Mike Joseph	Centre Daily Times
Jaimie Bumbarger	The Progress
Bert Kisner	Citizen
Cliff Warner	Harris Township
Mike Rose	Representative Kerry Benninghoff’s Office
Ann Glaser	Citizen
Hugh Mose	CATA
George Khoury	Citizen
Jon Eich	Citizen

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Klees called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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### 2. Approval of Minutes

*Mr. Corman made a motion to approve the February 27, 2007 Coordinating Committee minutes, with minor editorial corrections. Mr. Lee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### 3. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizen comments.

### 4. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update: Final Draft Public Participation Plan

Mr. Bloom noted that when the LRTP was adopted in 2006, the CCMPO acknowledged that several revisions would be needed to bring the Plan into full compliance with the SAFETEA-LU legislation by July 1, 2007. At meetings in November, January and February, staff has discussed many of the items, including the preparation of a new Public Participation Plan (PPP). Mr. Bloom explained that staff was requesting the Coordinating Committee to authorize advertisement of the final draft PPP for the required 45-day public comment period.

Mr. Bloom reported that the final federal rulemaking for SAFETEA-LU in February specifies the requirements of a PPP, with a primary requirement that MPOs "shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing public input from interested parties."

Mr. Bloom then reviewed the requirements of a PPP, and noted several elements included in the draft PPP that are intended to address comments received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and a Technical Committee member.

- Annual Report
- Annual Review of the PPP
- Interested Parties Database
- Research and Update Centre County Demographics
- Enhance Mailing Lists
- MPO Meeting Recordings
- Cable Television Broadcasts and Bulletin Board
- Coordination with Interested Parties
- Informational Brochures
- CCMPO Website upgrades

Mr. Bloom stated that the draft PPP must be advertised for a minimum 45-day public comment period. Copies of the PPP must also be provided to FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the document needs to be posted on the CCMPO website. Mr. Bloom reviewed the schedule for the public review process, concluding with the June 26 adoption of the PPP as part of the LRTP 2007 Update.

Mr. Bloom reported that the Technical Committee recommended that the Coordinating Committee authorize staff to advertise the PPP for public comment.

*Mr. Pytel made a motion to authorize staff to advertise the final draft Public Participation Plan for a 45-day public comment period. Mr. Buckalew seconded the motion.*

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Mr. Elnitski referred to the location of the public meeting at the Centre Region COG Building and questioned if there was a more accessible location for citizens and officials throughout the County. Mr. Bloom stated that staff would investigate other locations.

Ms. Goreham noted that the public meeting for the PPP is scheduled for the same evening as the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) General Forum meeting. Mr. Bloom responded that this date that worked best, and that the meeting was scheduled for 5:00 pm so that COG members could attend before the General Forum meeting. Mr. Elnitski noted that it was probably not as important for Coordinating Committee members to attend the meeting as it was for the public to attend.

*Mr. Pytel's motion was then voted upon and approved unanimously.*

### 5. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update

#### a. Project Ranking – Bridge and Transportation Enhancements (TE) Projects

Mr. Bloom provided the results of the technical project ranking process for the TE projects proposed during the public comment period for the LRTP in September 2006, and the additional bridge projects requested by PennDOT. Mr. Lee clarified that these projects are not on the LRTP or the TIP.

Mr. Bloom explained that when the MPO adopted the LRTP in September 2006, a commitment was made to evaluate the TE projects as part of the 2007 update. All of the TE and bridge projects are air quality exempt, so an air quality conformity analysis is not required.

Mr. Bloom also explained that the MPO specified that projects must receive municipal support to be included in the project ranking process. Thus, all of the candidate bridge and TE projects were referred to the host municipalities for review.

Mr. Bloom reviewed that the Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension Bike Facility project, rank 21. He noted that Ferguson Township requested that the section from West College Avenue to Tadpole Road be removed from consideration due to right-of-way constraints, agricultural conservation easements, and because the area was outside of the Regional Growth Boundary. The Township did support the concept of using “Share the Road” signs along this section. College Township and State College Borough supported the project without comments relative to sections outside of their municipal boundaries.

In response to a question from Mr. Lee, Mr. Bloom stated that the rank of the projects represented their rank within all of the LRTP projects.

Mr. Bloom noted the rank #88, the Big Hollow Road Bike Facility, lacked unanimous municipal support. Benner Township officials did not wish to offer support for the project, however, College Township did support the project, while acknowledging that it may be redundant. Penn State noted the existence of an informal path in this area, but supported the concept of enhancing this path.

Five projects were not evaluated due to lack of municipal support:

- Bellefonte Central Rail Trail - Tofrees Section – Patton Township noted that this project will be completed as development of the Tofrees Planned Community continues.

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- Blue and White Trail Extension – Ferguson Township does not support the project due to limited right-of-way and the existence of other options to achieve the same purpose.
- Spring Creek Canyon Trail – Benner Township does not wish to offer support.
- Bellefonte Central Rail Trail Spur from North Atherton Street - Ferguson Township does not support the project due to limited right-of-way and the existence of other options to achieve the same purpose.
- Circleville Road Bike Facility - Ferguson Township does not support the project due to limited right-of-way and the existence of other options to achieve the same purpose. Patton Township does not support the project due to limited right-of-way, and also noted that the Haugh Open Space conservation easement would need to be amended to permit a bikeway on the property.

Mr. Lee asked if the elimination of these projects from consideration would be communicated to the entities who proposed them. Mr. Bloom said that they would.

Mr. Bloom noted that the lack of information related to the TE projects made them difficult to rank, which confirms an earlier finding about the project ranking process. The ranking criteria also appear to favor TE projects that are viewed as serving a transportation purpose. Recreational trails do not score as favorably.

Mr. Bloom stated that the project costs are based on the estimated length of the projects, and he noted that funding will not be available for all of the ranked projects, based on the projections of available TE funding in the fiscal constraint table.

Relative to the bridge projects, Mr. Bloom noted Taylor Township has provided a letter of support for the Bell Hollow Road Bridge project over Sparrow Run, which was listed in the agenda as awaiting municipal comment. He further reported that there appears to be adequate funding for all of the requested projects through 2030.

Mr. Bloom emphasized that the Project Ranking Committee and the Technical Committee recommended that the CCMPO's adopted ranking criteria be used for the 2007 update. However, the committees also recommended that the bridge criteria be reevaluated beginning in Fall 2007, because the Sufficiency Rating factor upon which the current ranking criteria is based will be less important to PennDOT in the future. PennDOT is shifting its focus to use Structural Deficiency in prioritizing bridges, which is believed to be a more accurate measure of bridge conditions. Mr. Bloom added that the solicitation and evaluation of municipal bridges also need to be addressed if the bridge criteria are reevaluated.

Mr. Bloom said that PennDOT is working to establish priorities for 37 state bridges and 18 municipal bridges that have been deemed to be Structurally Deficient and are not on the current LRTP. PennDOT will establish priorities and provide suggested changes during the development of the 2009-2012 TIP.

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Mr. Bloom concluded the presentation by reporting that the Technical Committee approved two recommendations to the Coordinating Committee:

- Accept the technical ranking of the TE and Bridge project lists for the 2007 LRTP Update, with consideration to making rank adjustments based on the latest information from PennDOT
- Reevaluate the CCMPO's project ranking criteria relative to bridge projects in Fall 2007 following adoption of the 2007 LRTP Update.

Ms. Goreham asked if the Technical Committee's recommendation to reevaluate the project ranking criteria would allow the Structurally Deficient bridges to be ranked more quickly. Mr. Bloom said that PennDOT is currently working through its bridge assessment data and will establish its priorities.

Mr. Pytel clarified that Ferguson Township does support the Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension Bike Path project from West College Avenue north to South Atherton Street. The Township does not support the project south to Tadpole Road because much of the adjacent land is protected farmland. The Township did not support some of the other projects because there are bike paths parallel with the roads in those locations, and it would be a waste of money to duplicate the facilities.

Mr. Lee asked if revisiting the bridge criteria was due to the potential for catastrophic failures. Mr. Bloom responded that the primary reason was PennDOT's shift from using Sufficiency Rating to Structural Deficiency in their assessments. Currently, the project ranking criteria relies heavily on Sufficiency Rating. Staff will be seeking input from PennDOT and the MPO Committees on how to revise the ranking criteria.

Mr. Lee asked when other aspects of the ranking criteria would be reviewed. Mr. Bloom said that activity would occur during the next four-year LRTP update, starting in a year or so. Mr. Zilla added that staff is assuming that the next four-year update would occur based on the original LRTP adoption date of September 2006, but that staff has asked for clarification on whether the June 2007 date would be used to determine when the four-year update occurs.

Mr. Elnitski said that Benner Township did not support Spring Creek and Big Hollow trails because they did not want federal funding involved with trail development in those areas. The federal requirements are too stringent in environmentally sensitive areas. He added that Benner Township ranked the Bellefonte Central Rail Trail above the Fox Hill Road trail because they did not believe funding would be provided for Fox Hill Road. The supervisors felt that the Bellefonte Central Rail Trail was important for both recreational and transportation (commuting) uses.

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion to accept the technical ranking of bridge and transportation enhancements projects for the 2007 LRTP Update, and to approve the reevaluation of the CCMPO's project ranking criteria related to bridge projects. Mr. Pytel seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### **b. Status Report – Other Update Items**

Mr. Bloom noted that there are several other items being addressed in the 2007 Update to make the LRTP fully compliant with the recently released final federal rulemaking for SAFETEA-LU.

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Mr. Bloom reported that staff is plotting the projects in the LRTP on maps of the environmental resources in the County using the Centre County Comprehensive Plan Resource mapping. In addition, the environmental factors in the adopted project ranking criteria will be highlighted, and a consultation with the federal and state environmental resource review agencies is scheduled for May 23, 2007.

Mr. Bloom noted that consistency of the LRTP with planned growth and development plans is also required. Mr. Bloom said that staff utilized growth forecasts early in the process to establish project need. Existing LRTP mapping illustrates the established countywide growth areas in relation to transportation projects.

Mr. Lee asked if there was any requirement to map areas that are slated for open space or farm land. Mr. Bloom responded that agricultural security areas, conservation easements and other environmental features will be included in the mapping.

Mr. Bloom commented that the federal rulemaking calls for operational and management strategies to be addressed in the LRTP. Examples of these strategies include traffic signal coordination, traveler information services, traffic incident management, etc. The intent is to foster regional approaches, collaborative relationships, and funding arrangements for operational and management strategies, and the CCMPO is currently moving in that direction.

Mr. Bloom noted that visualization techniques in the LRTP and TIP development are required by SAFETEA-LU, including maps, displays and pictures. Staff believes that the LRTP and TIP currently address this requirement.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the schedule of tasks for adopting the LRTP update. In addition to the public comment period for the Public Participation Plan, a public comment period will be held for the LRTP Update from April 30 until June 4, 2007. A public meeting will be held on May 31. At the end of June, the Coordinating Committee should adopt the PPP and 2007 LRTP Update.

### **6. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

Mr. Kausch provided an update on the preparation of the Coordinated Plan, which is required in order to be eligible for three federal transit funding programs:

- Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC)
- New Freedom
- Section 5310

Preparation of this plan is an approved activity under the current FY 2006-07 Unified Planning Work Program, using \$60,000 in supplemental funding. In January 2007, the MPO approved a time extension which permits expenditure of the funding to carry forward into FY 2007-08.

Mr. Kausch summarized that there are four required elements in the Coordinated Plan: a) Inventory of all public, private, and human service transportation providers within Centre County; b) Analysis of gaps in the network that negatively impact the target populations; c) Identification of candidate projects; and d) Development of a prioritized list of the projects.

Mr. Kausch reported that staff discussed the Plan with PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation in early 2007, and developed a process to prepare and adopt the Coordinated Plan based on PennDOT's deadline of May 31, 2007.

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Mr. Kausch emphasized that PennDOT is calling this fiscal year a “transition year” for the three programs, which requires the preparation of an “interim” plan rather than a fully developed plan as was originally envisioned. PennDOT has indicated that the comparatively small grant amounts do not justify a complex plan. PennDOT has advised MPOs and RPOs to use the lists of projects, committees and processes that are already in place. In the future as documents are updated, public transit-human services coordination activities should be integrated into the MPO planning process.

Mr. Kausch presented a modified approach to preparing the Plan, including establishing a basic demographic analysis of Centre County with respect to the target populations (age, income, number of cars per household). Mr. Lee asked if staff considered areas outside the county, such as Altoona and Lewistown. Mr. Kausch said that there may be limited opportunity to consider other areas, but staff is essentially limited to identifying projects that are already on existing planning documents.

Mr. Kausch explained that staff will compile a list of public, private, and human service transportation providers within the County and list potential projects from existing documents that are suited to meeting the intent of the programs. A stakeholder committee will also be formed. Federal and state guidelines direct that this committee needs to be made up of transportation providers, members of the target population, and human service agencies serving these populations. The stakeholder committee will recommend projects for consideration. Mr. Kausch said that invitations for the stakeholder committee would be sent to 39 entities, with an expectation of about 50 percent participation.

Mr. Kausch reported on the proposed timeline. He noted that the Technical Committee expressed concern about the potential difficulty in gaining consensus on projects. He said that there are only 6-10 transit-related projects on existing planning documents that could be considered by the stakeholder committee.

Mr. Buckalew asked if provisions had been made for stakeholders to get to the meetings. Mr. Kausch said that the meetings will be held in central locations, accessible to transit service. If necessary, the meetings could be done in different areas of the county.

Mr. Lee said that neighboring counties should be invited and may become partners in funding. Mr. Kausch noted that every MPO and RPO in the state is responsible for completing a Coordinated Plan, and that because of that requirement, he envisioned meeting with neighboring organizations to see what they have in common.

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion authorizing the formation of a stakeholder advisory committee. Mr. Buckalew seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

Mr. Elnitski agreed that other counties should be invited to these meetings. Mr. Klees said that once the schedule of meetings is developed, staff could notify adjacent MPOs and RPOs to invite them to the meetings.

### **7. Countywide MPO Performance Review**

Mr. Klees explained that the potential action for this item is to authorize staff to circulate a new concept representation structure to the County’s municipalities for review and comment.

Mr. Zilla reviewed the history of the most recent expansion of the CCMPO. In July 1997, PennDOT, MPOs and RPOs agreed to “reengineer” Pennsylvania’s transportation planning and programming process. One of the changes was to get all of the geographic areas to become part of either an MPO or RPO.

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In Centre County, areas outside the original Centre Region MPO were not part of an MPO or RPO. At that time, the Coordinating Committee agreed to identify options for the representation of areas outside of the Centre Region MPO boundary. In November 2003, the Coordinating Committee approved the expansion of the MPO to a countywide entity, which became effective in January 2004.

Mr. Zilla noted that the proposal for expansion that was approved included a requirement to complete a performance review after two years. The purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of the countywide MPO and to address representation, staffing and budget issues. The CCMPO formed a Performance Review Committee in July 2006 and seven meetings have been held to date.

Mr. Zilla reviewed strategies to improve communication and information which the Review Committee discussed. Examples include expanded use of the MPO website and email notices, expanded circulation of meeting follow-up reports, and outreach meetings with elected officials from municipalities and planning regions.

Mr. Zilla also reported about the Review Committee's identification of important strategic issues that the MPO will have to address in the next few years. Examples include funding for the I-80/Route 26 local access interchange and I-99/I-80 high speed interchange, delivery of public transportation services, and the project selection process for the next major update of the LRTP in three years.

Mr. Zilla noted that the Review Committee initiated discussion about bylaws in March, and will continue the discussion at its next meeting.

Mr. Zilla explained that much of the Committee's discussion has been focused on representation structures. The original expansion agreement specified that the performance review must address representation for Marion and Walker Townships. These two municipalities are currently represented by Spring Township, Benner Township and Bellefonte Borough. In addition, the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County has requested representation, and the previous Chair of the CCMPO had directed staff to revisit the status of Penn State University.

Mr. Zilla briefly reviewed several alternative concepts for representation that were discussed: a) Modification of the existing structure with minor changes; b) Utilize a structure modeled on the Centre Region Council of Governments General Forum, in which all municipalities in the County would be at the table, but votes would be taken by "units"; and c) Utilize a county-based structure, with no municipal or regional votes.

Mr. Zilla explained that the Review Committee then reviewed a "regional" structure, which was included in the agenda packet. Mr. Zilla emphasized that this structure did not represent a recommendation by the Review Committee, it is just a concept for discussion. Mr. Zilla added that the Review Committee has not discussed the Technical Committee's structure, and that the financial impact will have to be determined after a representation structure is agreed upon.

Mr. Zilla then explained the regional structure, noting that the specific number of representatives for each planning region would be based on population ranges. The total number of representatives would not exceed the number of municipalities within a region, unless authorized by the MPO. Each region would appoint their own members, and would be responsible for a financial contribution, possibly based on population. The specific method of distributing the contribution within each of the municipalities in a region would be determined by those regions. The proposed structure also requires that members shall be municipal elected officials.

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Mr. Zilla stated that there was one vote for each 10,000 in population. This concept would result in 20 voting members and 3 non-voting members. The regional concept would also remove the Centre Regional Planning Commission as a voting member, remove the Bellefonte Borough as a non-voting member, and would add one additional voting member in the Nittany Valley Region and Penns Valley Region.

Mr. Zilla concluded by stating that the action requested by the Review Committee is to authorize staff to circulate a new concept representation structure to the County's municipalities and MPO member-organizations for review and comment. Mr. Klees then invited members to provide comments.

Ms. Michael stated that even though the Review Committee has held seven meetings, it seems like they are just getting started because there are a lot of issues to discuss. Staff has been helpful in looking up information for the group. She concluded that there are many issues still to discuss.

Mr. TenEyck commended the Review Committee, and stated that it was up to each MPO to find the right balance in membership. The process of involving the municipalities is very good since a lot of MPOs do not have municipal membership like the CCMPO.

Mr. Shannon noted that the membership was based on the populations from the 2000 Census. He recommended that it not be ten years before membership is updated. Mr. Klees responded that this issue has not been discussed, but that bylaws should address the issue. Mr. Shannon felt the process was going well and the Review Committee was doing a good job.

Mr. Corman thanked staff for its efforts, and added that participating on the Review Committee has been a learning experience as the Centre Region representatives and those in the rural areas try to understand each other's differences and issues. He thought that an important issue was trying to get information out to the municipalities and getting everyone involved to make this truly a countywide MPO. Mr. Corman thought it was unfortunate that the representation concept was being presented, because there was additional discussion that could have taken place. This is a work in progress.

Mr. Halderman thought that the performance review was a good idea and thanked the Review Committee for its work. He thought that any time all the municipalities were present to discuss issues, it results in good government.

Ms. Reese noted that she represents a rural area of four municipalities that does not have the population of the Centre Region, and needed more information about the financial implications. She emphasized that rural municipalities are having a hard time balancing their budgets and if being part of the process required committing a certain amount of money, the rural municipalities may not be able to do that. Mr. Klees thought that everyone on the Review Committee recognized that this was a key component, and asked Mr. Crum to briefly review the current budget for the MPO.

Mr. Crum reported that the MPO budget is just over \$400,000 annually. A major funding source is PennDOT, which provides state and federal funds. The other funding, which totals just over 50 percent of the budget, comes from local sources, including Centre County Government (\$32,000 plus one full-time planning position), CATA, the six Centre Region municipalities, and Benner and Spring Townships. Ms. Reese said that based on this approach, the financial impact would be greatest on those not listed, because they do not currently contribute. Mr. Klees noted that the financial structure is a hybrid of the current organizational structure and the previous organizational structure, which was focused on the Centre Region.

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Mr. Halderman noted that Bellefonte Borough withdrew from the CCMPO as a voting member because Council believed that the Borough is somewhat "landlocked" and does not have control over transportation issues. He added that there were also financial considerations. He noted that the current Council may have different opinions about whether they should be voting members. Mr. Elnitski responded that part of the Review Committee's discussion involved the need for presentations from the MPO to show outlying areas the benefits of the MPO process.

Mr. Luck supported the Review Committee's discussions, but agreed that evaluating the population and representation every 10 years based on the census was too long. Mr. Klees noted that the key focus is on regions, not individual municipalities.

Mr. Pytel pointed out that for every 10,000 persons in population, a region gets one vote, with a maximum of six members in the Centre Region. This is not fair to the Centre Region, which has 60 percent of the population, pays 60 percent of the cost, but would only get 30 percent of the vote. He said that if the structure is based on population ranges, the Centre Region should receive 8 votes.

Mr. Klees explained that the Review Committee also discussed a structure based on the COG model, where each municipality would have a vote, but unit votes would be used if there was a contested vote. He noted that one of the problems with designating 8 votes for the Centre Region would be allocating the additional two votes. Mr. Klees also noted that there are a number of ways to establish representation, including miles of highway, in which case a rural municipality like Rush Township would receive the most votes.

Mr. Pytel reiterated that either the representation should be based on the population ranges or not. He reported on the percentages of population and votes for each region, and stated that this was not a traditional method of fair representation. Mr. Pytel also questioned why the County Commissioners get two votes.

Mr. Lee said that because the MPO is planning for countywide transportation, information and participation were very important. However, he did not believe that fair representation should come at the expense of the population center of the county, and did not think that the regional structure would be approved, with the Centre Region having 60 percent of the population and only 30 percent of the vote. Mr. Lee stated that population is not the only criterion, but that it was the most important. Mr. Lee noted that there are other criteria, including geography, finances and impacts of transportation.

Mr. Lee emphasized that the regional structure did not represent a consensus from the Review Committee, and should not be presented to the municipalities as a consensus position. He proposed that two or three alternatives be provided to give a more accurate sense of the range of interests. Mr. Lee said that one potential alternative structure would have only one County vote, but would still have CATA and PennDOT, and would retain the Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) to coordinate land use and transportation planning. He said that eight voting members from the Centre Region could include one from each municipality and two at-large from the COG. Overall, he felt that more than one structure should be presented since there was more than one point of view.

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Mr. Klees noted that in the discussions, it was pointed out that in the Penns Valley and Nittany Valley, the regional planning commissions are comprised of both planning commissioners and elected officials. However, the Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) is comprised of only planning commissioners. If the regional structure was implemented, the CRPC might consider changing the structure to include elected officials. Mr. Buckalew noted that this was discussed a couple of years ago. Mr. Klees said there would be benefits of having planning commissioners and elected officials at the same table, not only for MPO activities, but other planning issues as well.

Mr. Buckalew stated that he is the only voting member who was present in 1997 when the expansion issue was first discussed. He noted that the pre-expansion structure illustrated in the agenda was misleading because this structure only existed for one year before the November 2003 expansion was approved. Prior to that time, there were 15 voting members, including Bellefonte Borough and Penn State University. Mr. Buckalew added that when MPO first discussed becoming a countywide entity in 2000, there was no pressure to include everyone because the expansion was voluntary and out of a sense of fairness to the rest of the county. When the current structure was approved, many members recognized that the Centre Region representation should not be harmed because it has the most population and road needs.

Mr. Buckalew also noted that the CRPC approves the annual contract with PennDOT, and also approves the UPWP. Because of this, the CRPC is not like other regional planning commissions in the County. He noted that the majority of letters in the agenda were addressed to the CRPC because it is the contracting entity for the MPO.

Mr. Spychalski thought that it would be helpful to present one or two other alternatives to the regional structure. He also noted that it was essential to present any final structure to the entire CATA Board of Directors for discussion prior to action being taken.

Mr. Elnitski referred to earlier comments about population, and stated that there is a lot of temporary population in the Centre Region from employees that use roads from the outlying areas to get there. That is why the Review Committee is trying to find a balance whereby the outlying areas feel as though they are part of the process. The Centre Region is only a small portion of the geographic area of the County. Mr. Buckalew responded that concern about those issues led to the current structure. Mr. Elnitski said that the current structure was meant to be an interim structure, and there were tough decisions still to be made about representation.

Mr. Exarchos said that there is no single indicator that the Review Committee can rely on to create an equitable representation structure, and that there were many options considered. He said that the bridge projects and other major projects in the County are not located solely in the Centre Region. The task is to create a countywide organization that has equity for all the regions, with no particular region having a stranglehold over the county. Mr. Exarchos noted that a second problem is that the county is very large, and issues that are critical in the Centre Region may not be as critical in another region. The issues in the other regions need to come before the MPO as well. Mr. Exarchos did not think there would be one structure that would make everyone happy. The question was whether a reasonable compromise could be developed. He was concerned that this organization would not have the foresight to reform itself, and that PennDOT would decide if they truly wanted a countywide MPO, because the Department holds the contract that originally formed the MPO. He did not think the MPO could continue to operate with the 1982 formation agreement.

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Ms. Goreham commented that the most important work of the Review Committee is not about the representation structure, but the communication strategies. She was pleased that a representative has been appointed from the Upper Bald Eagle Planning Region. Ms. Reese noted that although the region was not represented, that did not mean that the MPO did not address projects from the region.

Ms. Goreham felt that the participants in the MPO process should be surveyed to determine if there is a bias, or if issues are not being addressed. She requested that a survey be sent to gauge the level of satisfaction, and to solicit detailed comments and suggestions.

Mr. Klees noted that as the Review Committee was going through the evaluation process, staff was suggesting items for discussion. He stated that the representation structure was too political for staff to be addressing, and explained that he proposed some concepts, including one similar to the regional structure. Mr. Klees said that his intent in presenting the information at this meeting was to advance the dialogue by having something for MPO input and discussion.

Mr. Klees commented that many people feel that the MPO does a good job addressing issues throughout the entire county. However, there seems to be a perception that certain people have certain agendas and past histories, and he encouraged members to get past that perception, and find an equitable structure of representation, ideas, communication and finances. Mr. Klees stated that given the comments from members, he did not advocate sending this concept to the municipalities for comment. He thought that the Review Committee could develop additional concepts for discussion.

Mr. Jon Eich, a former Centre County employee, recalled that the rural municipalities were given a choice of becoming part of the SEDA-COG RPO, or becoming part of the Centre County MPO. He stated that prior to the expansion of the MPO, the Centre County Planning Office solicited input from each of the rural municipalities about transportation priorities, which were presented to the MPO. He added that one issue involved in the decision to expand was the need for additional staff to support the MPO. Centre County government's contribution was initially \$75,000, and then increased to \$90,000 to help cover the cost of two staff positions. He pointed out that this amount was three times the contribution of the largest municipality in the MPO. County funding was committed to cover the voting representation of the rural municipalities, because the rural municipalities did not have the financial resources and it would be difficult to get them to participate if they also had to provide financial input.

Mr. Pytel responded that the Centre Region MPO originally evolved because PennDOT had to start somewhere in forming an MPO after Centre County reached a certain population. The Centre Region had the majority of the population at that time, and also invited other municipalities who wanted to become members to join. The MPO solicited projects from outlying districts and one of the first projects was a proposed bypass around Centre Hall. He reiterated his previous comment that if the votes were going to be based on population, then they should be based on population without any restrictions. Mr. Pytel also expressed his concern about Centre County government taking over the MPO and appointing members to the Committee.

Mr. Exarchos said that he did not recall the Review Committee being asked for a consensus on the regional structure concept model. He thought the Review Committee should review the concept again and determine if there is a consensus to support this concept.

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Mr. Klees responded that even if a majority of the MPO agreed with this concept, he was not sure what that would mean. Under the current structure, the people who seem to be most opposed to the regional structure represent the entities that finance most of the non-state, federal or county shares.

Mr. Elnitski noted that the regional concept was not based solely on population, but on much discussion about several different issues.

*Ms. Goreham made a motion to ask the Review Committee to develop one or two additional alternative concepts for representation, and to prepare financial plans for the alternatives. Mr. Spsychalski seconded the motion.*

Ms. Goreham asked if a survey could be sent out to gather input. Mr. Klees noted that some municipalities may not have enough experience with, or knowledge of the MPO process to answer those questions. Ms. Reese agreed.

*A role call vote was taken, resulting in 10 votes in favor of the motion, 1 not in favor, and 2 abstentions. The motion was approved by a majority vote.*

**8. Announcements**

Mr. Klees reviewed the upcoming meetings.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler  
Recording Secretary