

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

**Tuesday, June 26, 2007  
6:00 pm  
College Township Municipal Building**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members Present:**

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)
Chris Exarchos	Centre County
Ken Hall	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dan Klees, Chair	College Township
Karen Michael (for Kevin Kline)	PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
Bob Neff	Halfmoon Township
George Pytel	Ferguson Township
Jadine Reese	Upper Bald Eagle Planning Region
Frank Royer	Spring Township
John Saylor	Centre County
Jack Shannon	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Harold Nanovic (for Tom TenEyck)	PennDOT Central Office
John Spychalski	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Rob Cooper	Penn State University
Frank Halderman	Bellefonte Borough

**Others Present:**

Bob Crum	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Tom Zilla	CRPA
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA – Recording Secretary
Mike Bloom	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office
Mike Joseph	Centre Daily Times
Hugh Mose	CATA
Michelle Barbin	Mountaintop Region
Mike Savage	Rush Township
George Khoury	Citizen
Amy Farkas	Harris Township
Tina Yackle	Citizen
Sarah Scheffey	Citizen
Don Franson	Harris Township

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### 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.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

*Mr. Buckalew made a motion to approve the May 22, 2007 Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Lee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### 3. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizen comments.

### 4. Member Reports

#### College Township

Mr. Klees reported that College Township has been working with developers who are proposing a development for the former South Ridge Motel site on South Atherton Street. They are proposing a Sheetz convenience store, a building with a bank, a car wash and a restaurant. Access issues continue to be a problem with this proposed development.

#### Ferguson Township

Mr. Pytel stated that another person was killed on State Route 26 at the base of Pine Grove Mountain.

#### Patton Township

Mr. Luck noted that Patton Township is coordinating traffic signals on North Atherton Street from Douglas Drive to Vairo Boulevard. This should be completed in the next month.

#### PennDOT

Ms. Michael reported that PennDOT is starting the TIP update, which Mr. Zilla will explain later in the meeting.

### 5. CCMPO Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Ms. Meek stated that new federal legislation requires new elements be included in the PPP. One major change is that "interested parties" need to be identified. She reviewed future actions that staff will undertake as part of this Plan.

Ms. Meek said copies of the approved plan need to be provided to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The draft Plan is posted on the MPO web site and a minimum 45-day public comment period was held.

Ms. Meek stated that only one comment was received during the comment period, which asked that the PPP address the following:

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- Define the authority of the MPO and to whom it reports
- How members are selected
- Recommend that membership selection should be by geographic area, not population
- Above factors are critical to a bona fide “PPP”

Ms. Meek said that in response to this comment, staff is recommending that the narrative sections from the adopted LRTP addressing MPO structure and responsibilities be included in the PPP. Also, an appendix should be added listing the MPO members.

Ms. Meek reviewed the schedule. She stated that the public comment period was held April 9 to May 24, 2007. The Technical Committee reviewed public input on June 13, and the consensus of the members was that the MPO should adopt the plan.

*Mr. Lee made a motion to adopt the Public Participation Plan, seconded by Mr. Buckalew. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **6a. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update**

Ms. Meek explained that minor changes needed to be made to the LRTP to comply with federal legislation. These changes are related to environmental mitigation, consultations with resource agencies, consistency of the Plan with planned growth and development plans, operational and management strategies, and visualization techniques in plans and TIP development. To address these new requirements, revisions were made to several chapters within the LRTP.

In Chapter V (Project Evaluation Process), changes were made to address environmental mitigation and consultation. The changes include:

- Documented known environmental resources within the region, utilizing the existing Centre County Comprehensive Plan Resource mapping
- Created overlay maps of proposed transportation projects on the resource maps
- Adopted project ranking criteria that considers environmental factors
- Consulted with Resource Agencies on May 23, 2007

Regarding consistency of the LRTP with growth and development plans, staff took credit for the growth forecasts that were used to establish project priorities. Existing mapping shows the established countywide growth areas in relation to transportation projects. For Operational and Management Strategies, changes in Chapter V involved taking credit for the types of projects that are being programmed and the project ranking criteria.

A major change to the Plan was in Chapter VII (Transportation Projects). The MPO reviewed additional bridge and Transportation Enhancement projects. After evaluation, nine new bridge projects were added to the project list and map. No projects had to be delayed, because there was an adequate surplus of bridge funds. Five new Transportation Enhancement projects (bike/pedestrian) were added. Eight projects on the current LRTP fall beyond fiscal constraint.

For visualization techniques in the LRTP and TIP development, staff is committed to continuing their practice of using a wide variety of maps, displays and pictures.

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A public comment period for the LRTP was held from April 30 to June 4, 2007. Copies of the Plan were made available at four locations in the County, as well as online. Two individuals provided written comments, which can be classified in two distinct categories. First were specific project requests:

- Synchronize lights on North Atherton Street
- Plan an I-80 interchange closer to State College, even if connector road is necessary
- Plan Corridor O
- Plan improvements to eliminate the bottleneck around Potters Mills on US 322 so 4-lane highway continues from Lewistown right up to State College (Boalsburg)
- Complete Skytop (pyrite problem). If parts are completed, open those areas even if entire project is still ongoing.

Ms. Meek said that staff responded to each of these comments with the current status of the respective projects. The other comment was related to the preservation of the Linden Hall Historic District. She said that staff would forward this comment to PennDOT for consideration when actual project development occurs.

Ms. Meek reviewed the schedule, explaining that the MPO needs to be SAFETEA-LU compliant by July 1, 2007. The consensus of the Technical Committee was that the MPO should adopt the LRTP Update.

*Mr. Spsychalski made a motion to adopt the 2007 LRTP Update, seconded by Mr. Pytel. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Meek noted that the final revisions to the LRTP would be distributed to all members.

### **6b. Transportation Enhancement Project Amendment**

A letter from Harris Township was distributed.

Ms. Meek reviewed the 2005 policy change, which states that MPOs are longer permitted to carry over unobligated TE/HTS/SR2S funds to the next fiscal year.

In January 2007, Harris Township presented an estimate for the South Atherton Street Bike Path that they had developed with PennDOT. At that time, additional federal funding was provided to Harris by the MPO, and Harris Township had also committed additional local funding. Currently \$195,225 is available on the TIP for this project. With the additional local funding commitment, \$215,293 is available. However, the latest cost estimate exceeds that amount by \$70,707. Harris Township wants to let the project in July.

Ms. Meek stated that she approached PennDOT for additional money, and was told that if the MPO takes the money from the 2008 line item (\$20,925) the state will provide money from the statewide line item (\$49,782).

Because this request is greater than \$20,000, staff would normally go to the TE Review Committee, then to the Technical Committee and then on to the Coordinating Committee. Due to the short time period before the desired bid letting date, staff recommended coming straight to the Coordinating Committee for

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formal approval. Ms. Meek stated that five of the six members of the TE Review Committee recommended approval.

*Mr. Pytel made a motion to amend the Centre County 2007-2010 TIP to transfer \$20,925 from the FY 2008 line item and \$49,782 from the statewide line item to the Atherton Street Project. Mr. Neff seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

### 7. **FY 2006-07 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Zilla explained that there are typically UPWP budget revisions at the end of each fiscal year. A new PennDOT and FHWA policy states that any adjustments over \$10,000 require MPO approval. In this case, there is one adjustment to the Long Range Transportation Plan line item that exceeds that amount.

Mr. Zilla said that most of the adjustments are unremarkable. In many years, there are line items that staff does not work on because they are focused on other key tasks. He noted that this budget represents federal and state dollars that come to the MPO staff, along with the required local match. However, it does not include all funding, because both the municipal and county officials contribute cash amounts well above what is shown here.

Mr. Lee asked if staff was not monitoring key projects or putting money into public transportation projects. Mr. Zilla stated that staff involvement with key projects has slowed down with the suspension of work on Corridor O1 and the South Central Centre County Transportation Study (SCCCTS). That left only the acid rock drainage problem and I-80 interchanges, which have had no activity.

Mr. Lee asked about funds being shifted from the bicycle and pedestrian line item. Mr. Zilla said that Ms. Meek has spent time on the PPP, LRTP, and worked with sponsors of the active Enhancements projects. The County is the lead agency on some of the rail trail projects, so Ms. Meek has limited involvement in those projects.

Mr. Lee said that this would indicate that there is less emphasis being placed on bike/pedestrian and public transportation. Mr. Zilla said that there have been fewer hours charged to the traditional public transportation line items because Mr. Kausch's time has been spent on the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, which is being funded with supplemental funds.

Referring back to the pedestrian/bike item, Mr. Zilla stated that with Ms. Meek's other activities, the time was not available. She did spend a lot of time with project sponsors to get the Enhancements projects moving. With the adoption of the LRTP and PPP, staff priorities will be shifting again, so more time will be spent on some of the other items in the future.

*Mr. Exarchos made a motion to approve the budget revisions to the UPWP. Mr. Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

### 8. **2009-2012 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Zilla explained that staff attended the Planning Partners meeting in early June and received final guidance for the TIP update. Key issues for the MPO include information on the Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program, federal and state funding status, financial guidance, procedural guidance and the bridge risk assessment.

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Mr. Lee asked that several questions be answered as part of the presentation:

- How does this process differ from other years?
- When in the process will land use planning be coordinated with transportation planning at the policy level?
- When will there be a comprehensive and proactive look at the transportation system, rather than reviewing project by project?
- Is there a different synchronization with the LRTP this time?

Ms. Meek reviewed the TE funding. She said that staff was under the impression that the MPO would not receive a new allocation of funds, because it is not likely that there will be any carry-over projects in Centre County. When the Puddintown Road Trail and the Atherton Street Path are underway, there will only be one project remaining on the program – the State College Borough Streetscape Project. It is likely that the streetscape funds will be obligated in 2008, and there will be no projects to carry into the new TIP. It was reported at the planning partners meeting that everyone will receive a TE funding allocation and the MPO will receive the following funding for 2009 and 2010:

- FFY 2009 - \$309,000
- FFY 2010 - \$321,000

The funds have historically been awarded to projects over a two-year allocation, with a statewide funding round to solicit projects. Because there is a backlog of TE projects statewide, there will be no formal statewide application cycle. Staff will be working with PennDOT to develop a process to add new projects to the program. It may be possible to add the projects that the MPO recommended for statewide funding in the last round. Once a process is developed, staff will present it to the MPO for their recommendation in September.

Mr. Lee asked if this meant that the former process was deficient. Ms. Meek replied that her perception is that the CCMPO was more fiscally conservative than other areas. The MPO programmed only the money they had, whereas some areas over-programmed because they knew that some of the projects would not be completed. Also, the CCMPO was very diligent in working with project sponsors to move stalled projects off the TIP so that other projects could advance.

Mr. Pytel asked if new projects could be added, such as completing the Pine Grove Mills Streetscape Project. Ms. Meek said that is the question staff has to discuss with PennDOT. She noted that the three projects from the last round were the Centre Hall Sidewalk Project, the Village of Boalsburg Streetscape and the State College Borough Streetscape Project.

Mr. Lee said that ultimately, the MPO should be the decision maker. Ms. Meek agreed. She said that when projects are solicited statewide, the projects that the MPO decides to add to the program are then formally added by the State Transportation Commission formally to a statewide list.

Mr. Zilla reviewed federal and state funding status, explaining that SAFETEA-LU authorization expires after fiscal year 2009. He stated that the Federal Highway Trust Fund is projected to be in a deficit status in 2009. Therefore, Congress is going to have to deal with the Highway Trust Fund and the reauthorization at the same time. This TIP extends three years beyond that time, and the financial guidance assumes that the levels of funding present in SAFETEA-LU will increase four percent in the years beyond that, but there is no guarantee.

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According to the financial guidance, the Highway allocation is just over \$50 million for four years. The Transit allocation is a little over \$18 million, although there are other sources of transit funding that are not always included in the TIP. Mr. Zilla said that he hoped these numbers would be adjusted once the state budget is finalized. He noted that the Interstate Management Program would continue, as will the spike program.

The procedural guidance included additional documentation activities for staff. The MPO will still be required to do an air quality conformity analysis. Mr. Zilla said that background work for the analysis will be done between September and November. In years past, the MPO has always submitted the Preliminary Draft TIP to PennDOT in January. Mr. Zilla said the CCMPO is unusual in that they formally approve the Preliminary Draft TIP. Staff typically does this in most other areas. PennDOT's response usually comes back in March. This year, the schedule calls for that response to come back in February.

In September, staff hopes to come back to the MPO with the status of current projects. This will give the MPO an idea of what projects will have to carry over to the next TIP.

Mr. Lee asked where potential projects would come from. Mr. Zilla said that other than the schedule, this TIP update would follow the same process for the MPO. He said that when the 2007-2010 TIP was drafted, the LRTP was being developed at the same time. The LRTP will be the guide for the next TIP update, and projects will come from that list, assuming there is funding available for new projects. Mr. Lee said that if there were new or innovative projects proposed, they should be considered. Mr. Zilla said that would have to come from the MPO.

Referring to Mr. Lee's question about a comprehensive look at land use, Mr. Zilla said that staff believes that was done as part of the adoption of the LRTP, and he did not anticipate this discussion as part of the TIP update. Mr. Lee asked if the process would be different two years from now. Mr. Zilla said that the TIP and LRTP would be updated again two years from now. Mr. Lee said that he did not want the MPO to be put in a narrow process that rules out innovation. Mr. Zilla said that the MPO is operating under a set of federal regulations, and new planning rules state that we must be able to show financial resources to complete projects. If innovative projects or programs are developed, we still have to show the financial capability to sustain that over time.

Mr. Zilla stated that PennDOT is completing their bridge assessment across the Commonwealth, with the focus on those bridges that have been designated as structurally deficient. The goal is that 85 percent of the capital bridge funding will be dedicated to those bridges. Maintenance funding does not come through the MPO, but PennDOT can use those funds on structurally deficient bridges as well. He noted that the bridge situation changes quickly and there may need to be changes in the LRTP and TIP in order to address the bridges that are most at risk. He said that staff needs to get a better handle on the municipal bridges, and Mr. Bloom will be working on a program to become more proactive in the future.

Pointing out key items, Mr. Zilla said that the state funding for public transportation will be a big issue and may change the overall funding picture. Obtaining spike funding for the I-80/Route 26 local access interchange will be a priority, because this project is necessary in order to get started on the high-speed interchange. The project is scheduled for a bid let in December 2008 if construction funds are available. Once the bridge assessment is done, the identification of bridge projects will be very important.

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Mr. Lee asked if there was an opportunity in the process to coordinate with earmarks. Mr. Zilla said that he has been talking with Congressman Peterson's office about federal earmarks. Earmarks have been received in the current TIP for the baseball stadium projects. The Congressman's office has indicated that the MPO should be considering new requests. Earmarks come through the Authorization Bill, which is once every five or six years, and also through the annual appropriations process.

Mr. Nanovic said that specific language in earmarks should also be requested. If for some reason a project that carries an earmark is stalled, language should be added stating that the earmark can be used within a range of miles so that the money is not just sitting on the TIP without the ability to use it. He also asked that members request that obligation authority come with earmarks so that it does not have to come from the TIP.

### 9. Announcements

Mr. Spychalski reported on the state public transportation funding situation. Mr. Mose added that the legislation proposes that all the existing transit programs and any new money be consolidated into one allocation formula. This is based on passengers, revenue miles, and revenue hours with a supplement for senior passengers. On the surface, this sounds good, but he feared that this formula would take awhile to be fully realized, and may not be as beneficial to CATA as it might appear. He did think it was a step in the right direction. Mr. Spychalski thanked the MPO for their support on this important issue.

Mr. Lee asked about the proposed increase in the local match from 13 to 20 percent. Mr. Mose said that there are several pieces of the proposed legislation that are controversial, and this is at the top of the list. He said there are different levels of local match requirements for transit systems throughout the Commonwealth. The proposal contains a provision that no local match would be required to increase by more than 5 percent annually. He said that it would take many years for some transit systems to get to 20 percent. Mr. Lee asked what the Centre Region's local match currently was. Mr. Mose said it was about \$425,000 and with the proposed increase, it would be about \$550,000. This is a small gap because the Centre Region has contributed more than the required match for the past several years.

Mr. Mose stated that there is a real concern about the adequacy of the amount of dollars relative to the Governor's Transportation Funding and Reform Committee recommendations. It appears that this program would generate about \$250 million in the first year for transit. The Reform Committee recommended \$900 million. The expectation would be that the \$250 million would be a starting point and it would rise in future years.

Another concern is that in the current proposal there is an annual growth cap. While a formula based on miles, hours and passengers would be beneficial to CATA, there would be difficulties in fully realizing our formula allocation with the cap in place. It would take many years.

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Mr. Klees commented on Rush Township's request from May 2007 to reconsider adding the proposed I-80 interchange in Rush Township to the Centre County LRTP, noting that several issues need to be considered:

- How to determine whether the MPO wants to consider the request, given the March 2006 action on a prior request from Rush Township.
- If the MPO wants to consider the request, how is that done in terms of a motion and vote to move beyond the last action.

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- If the MPO considers the request, what are the options for a response and how are those options presented.
- Should the discussion take place at a special meeting or a regular meeting.
- Where should the meeting be held to make sure that all interested parties can participate.

Mr. Klees thought that at the earliest, this discussion would take place at a special meeting in August or at the regular meeting in September. Instead of responding to the information tonight, Mr. Klees asked that members email or write to the Chair or staff with questions or comments.

Mr. Mike Savage said that when the request from Rush Township was presented at the last regular MPO meeting, People Protecting Communities presented correspondence that included an abbreviated analysis of reasons why the MPO should not change its position. He wanted to make sure that all sides of the proposal would have the opportunity to present their views. Mr. Klees said that if the MPO decides to discuss the request, he envisioned two meetings. The first would be to decide whether to consider a new motion and a second meeting to allow for presentations and discuss options.

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Mr. Klees reviewed upcoming MPO meetings.

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler  
Recording Secretary